

MEMOIR
OF
THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM LAVERS,
LATE OF HONITON, DEVON.

BY
JOHN SHERMAN ELLIOTT.

"The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."—MAL. ii. 6.

"Shall not the mind, the heaven-wrapt mind, bequeath
To future days some living portraiture?
The thoughts that glow within, in which they breathe
A loftier being,—shall they not endure?"

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

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TO
SIR JOHN KENNAWAY,
OF ESCOT LODGE, BART.

HONOURED SIR,

WHEN elevated station appears associated with real dignity, such as is peculiar to the children of God, He who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, has condescended, even through the weakest instrumentality, to sanction such a partial development of the fruits of his Spirit, as may redound to the glory of his name, and the encouragement of his tried and afflicted followers.

The book of providence has been, generally, considered, both for interest and direction, subordinate only to the book of revelation. In the latter we are instructed, that the providence and grace of God are only different aspects of the same wise and beneficent government; whilst, in the former, we find new records of the Lord's watchful care over his faithful servants, calculated to inspire adoring gratitude, and afford the richest consolation.

Amongst the direct interpositions of Divine Providence on behalf of the subject of this Memoir, that of his being introduced to your notice, and favoured with your friendship and esteem, is one of the most re-

markable ; since it placed him in a sphere for which he was peculiarly adapted, and shed a hallowed and soothing influence over the close of a life prematurely sacrificed in the service of the sanctuary. That gracious Being who entrusted the pensive author of the "Task" to an Unwin, Newton to a Thornton, and Watts to the sedulous care of the house of Abney, in mercy committed our dear departed friend, in his time of need, to the Christian sympathy and tender kindness of the house of Kennaway.

The family and friends of this faithful servant of the Most High desire to avail themselves of this address, as the medium of conveying their tribute of gratitude for those numerous and continued acts of kindness which ministered so largely to his comfort, and materially alleviated his severe and protracted sufferings. For it cannot be forgotten, that the vicinity of your dwelling proved to him the land of Goshen ; that there, whatever could conduce to his health, or assuage the virulence of disease, was freely and liberally supplied : that there, a daughter in Israel watched by his dying couch, cheered and refreshed his spirit as he passed through the valley of the shadow of death ; and closed his wearied eyes, "in the sure and certain hope of his perfect consummation and bliss, in eternal and everlasting glory."

Allow me, in concluding, to record the lively sense, and just appreciation, entertained by that section of the Church of Christ to which our now glorified brother was attached, for the catholic benevolence which has fostered her endeavours for usefulness at home, as well as her Missionary labours abroad.

It cannot but rejoice every pious mind to reflect, that God is not unmindful to forget these tokens of love to his name ; that they are written in the book of his remembrance, and that, in the great day of his appearing, Christ will graciously acknowledge, and reward them openly.

The most acceptable, although feeble, tribute which I can offer, shall not be withheld : Ascription of glory and praise to God, for all the good that is accomplished ; and union with his people in earnest prayer to the Father of mercies, that you and your house may walk evermore in the light of his countenance, and, having served your generation according to his will, may experience an easy and triumphant entrance into his glorious and everlasting kingdom.

I am,

Honoured Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

JOHN S. ELLIOTT.

DENMARK-HILL,

March 12th, 1833.

PREFACE.

OF the divers modes in which truth may be represented, that of biography has ever proved peculiarly impressive; since it arrests the attention, and chains the heart of the reader, by awakening in his soul the sympathies of our common nature, and insensibly leading him to associate with the subject of the narrative, the principles he professed, and the result which those principles produced.

The propriety of laying before the public a biographical sketch of any man occupying a comparatively humble station, is at least doubtful, if there be nothing remarkable in the subject: if he be a Minister, it is decidedly objectionable, unless his doctrine be so pure, and his conduct so blameless, that he may safely be held up as a model for imitation. Whether the character exhibited in these pages will be found to comport with such a standard, and whether the tendency of his writings to promote the true happiness of his fellow men will more than compensate for the absence of adscititious ornament, is confidently submitted to the candid and reflecting reader.

True delineations of devoted and useful men are valuable, as affording additional evidence of the power and grace of God, and as calculated to call forth lively gratitude to "the Giver of every good and perfect gift;" since on every successive monument of the Redeemer's power to save, the imperishable motto is inscribed, "To the praise of the glory of his grace!" Nor can a doubt be reasonably entertained

of their tendency to produce a salutary influence on the mind, either from a grateful sense of kindred feeling, or from the bitterness of a contrasted experience.

May not a hope likewise be cherished, that some young readers of this record of early piety, may thereby be induced to consecrate the prime of their days to the Lord, who claims *the first-fruits* as peculiarly his own? that such as are called to suffer for righteousness' sake may be consoled and encouraged by a recital of God's gracious dealings towards his faithful and tried servant? and that those in humble life may learn from the example herein exhibited, how they may become truly wise and honourable, and instruments of extensive good?

No mere teaching is so instructive as a bright and consistent example; hence the aphorism, "Either teach not at all, or teach by living:" neither is anything so well calculated to convince men of the practicability of living the Christian, as acquaintance with characters eminent for exalted piety. It were easy to cite the authority of distinguished theologians and moralists in confirmation of this truth; but an illustration from the pen of Professor Campbell will suffice, as at once conclusive on that point, and as appositely describing the design proposed in the following memoir: "If," says the Doctor, "in order to avoid some imminent danger, or to attain some valuable end, I must climb some steep and craggy mountain, whose summit is to appearance inaccessible; or must pursue my way through some lone and dreary desert; do but show me the prints of a human foot, or rather point out others who have successfully engaged in the same arduous enterprise, and I shall sooner be prevailed upon to attempt it, than by a thousand arguments."

Since it may be proper, from a becoming regard to public opinion, to offer some reasons which induced the writer to prepare this Memoir, he shuns not to express a conviction that the constraining principles were the glory of God, and the welfare of immortal souls; whilst an intimate knowledge

of the character and manner of life of the subject of the narrative, together with the possession of numerous documents, appeared in the light of a talent, for the faithful employment of which he was deeply responsible.

To those friends whose communications have enabled the Editor to constitute the subject of the memoir, in no small degree, his own biographer, he tenders his grateful acknowledgments.

It remains only to commit the work to the blessing of God, and the prayers of the faithful: and to state, that whatever profit may accrue from its publication will be devoted to the cause of Christian Missions.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS Second Edition is, at the suggestion of several friends, submitted to the public in a somewhat compressed form, with a view to a more extended circulation. Each sentiment still bears the impress of the subject of the memoir, whilst needless repetition has been avoided, and inaccuracies have been corrected. If, happily, a perusal of this little volume be attended with profit to the reader, the Editor earnestly solicits an interest in his prayers for the blessing of that gracious Being to rest upon it,

“ Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
Whose approbation prosper even mine.”

CANTERBURY VILLAS,
MAIDA VALE,
June 18th, 1848.

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MEMOIR
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REV. WILLIAM LAVERS.

CHAPTER I.

Early life of Mr. Lavers.—His conversion to God, with the persecution it excited.—His banishment from the paternal roof.—His appointment as a Local Preacher.—Commencement of his labours, and his favourable reception.

It may safely be asserted, that of all the fruits of biography, as well as of friendship,

“The fruit most fair
Is virtue kindling at a rival fire.”

There is something peculiarly encouraging in tracing the progress of individuals who, like the subject of the following memoir, have risen, by the weight of moral and spiritual excellence, from an obscure station to one the most honourable and useful in society, that of a faithful Minister of the Gospel of Christ. From the character here presented to their view, Christians in humble life may anticipate what the grace of God can enable them to effect by an entire and unhesitating dedication of all their powers to the glory of their Creator, and the service of mankind.

The career of this servant of Christ was short, for his sun went down at noon : but if it be viewed in the light of revelation, it will prove to have been sufficiently long and brilliant to guide the Christian pilgrim to Mount

Zion. And, surely, to creatures of a day, and yet the heirs of immortality, his early tomb may convey an important admonition; since, if it be allowed that he trod some valleys which we may not be called to pass through, assuredly the valley of the shadow of death is not one of them.

Mr. Richard Lavers, the father of the subject of this memoir, was a respectable farmer, whose habits of regularity and persevering industry enabled him, by the blessing of Providence, to bring up a large family with credit, and to procure for them such moderate advantages of education as the vicinity of his residence afforded.

William Lavers, his youngest son, was born at Blackauton, near Dartmouth, in Devonshire, on the 14th of January, 1797. There were at least two periods during his infancy when his life was in imminent danger. To one of these he occasionally referred, as an instance in proof of a particular providence.

The week following that in which he had been baptized, his two brothers who had been present on the occasion, conceived the idea of again realizing the pleasure they had enjoyed in witnessing the ceremony, by performing it themselves in a somewhat similar manner. Having found a favourable opportunity, they carried their brother to the pump, and poured the water upon him in so copious a measure, that had not their mother rescued him at that critical moment, his life must have fallen a sacrifice to that innate but often dangerous propensity in children, the love of imitation.

He has been described by one of his relatives as distinguished, when very young, by an open and prepossessing countenance, which proved the index to an amiable and engaging disposition. It has also been remarked by the same individual, that at an early period he gave indications of an intelligent and reflecting mind, and manifested considerable aptitude in learning,

although his advantages were few, having been early removed from his favourite pursuits to assist in the farm, for which occupation his father appears to have designed him.

Concurrent testimony establishes the fact, that from a very early period of life William Lavers became the subject of serious impressions; and he has himself observed, that so far as memory could retrace the days of childhood, there had been seasons when, with more or less distinctness, thoughts of death and of eternity engaged his mind, producing mixed emotions of pleasure and of dread.

The free grace of God, and the fidelity of his youthful servant to the measure of light imparted, will appear more conspicuously when we refer to the unfavourable circumstances by which he was surrounded.

The pure light of the Gospel had not illumined the vicinity of his father's dwelling; no Sunday-school with zealous Teachers had risen to instruct its youth in the way of salvation; nor was the lamp of scriptural truth nor the light of a holy example exhibited under the paternal roof, to dispel the moral darkness, and afford the best supply for the absence of pastoral and catechetical instruction. His infant ear never listened to the precepts of the Gospel from a mother's lips, nor was he allured to accept its invitations by the powerful influence of maternal love; no father, blending a wise restraint with winning kindness, led him to recognise a Father in heaven; his ear was not saluted betimes with the voice of joy and of thanksgiving, which is in the dwellings of the righteous; nor did he witness those blessed fruits of the Spirit which convert them into the porch of heaven. But that love which far surpasses a father's watchful care and a nursing mother's tenderness, visited and preserved him when as yet he knew it not, until it secured his best affections, and early bound him a willing disciple to the cross.

From a tender age he experienced much pleasure in accompanying his parents to church, where the singing particularly engaged his attention ; and in that part of the service he joined with apparent earnestness.

One of the earliest motions of the Holy Spirit on his heart, which he could distinctly recollect, was connected with his hearing a lady highly commend Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress;" which induced a desire to possess the work, and a resolve to purchase it as soon as he was able. The next indication of an incipient work of grace was, that there were seasons when he felt convictions that all was not right within, that some change was needful, and that religion was a subject of such importance as justly to demand serious consideration and inquiry. These reflections were not inoperative, as they led him frequently to withdraw from his thoughtless companions, that he might occupy some portion of his time in reading the word of God and in prayer. He now began to remonstrate with his young playfellows on any impropriety he observed in their conversation or behaviour, and to admonish them, chiefly in Scripture language. He could remember feeling an interest, even from his childhood, in attending funerals at the parish church, where the peculiar solemnity of the burial-service became from time to time increasingly affecting and impressive, and the solemn echo of that sublime and appropriate Scripture, "I am the resurrection and the life," never failed to excite a peculiarity and intensity of feeling which he was unable to describe, and for which he could not account.

When about the age of sixteen, a circumstance occurred which, though apparently trivial, was fraught with consequences the most momentous; since it eventually led, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to that decisive change in sentiment and conduct designated in the Scriptures, "the new birth," which proved the foundation of Mr. Lavers's exalted character and extensive usefulness.

Early one morning, a milk-woman, passing by his father's house, arrested William's attention by exclaiming, "Now is the time to save your souls; for there is a Methodist in the town, preaching with all his might." He no sooner heard the welcome sound, than he set off for the place which she had pointed out. On entering the room he contrived to get as close to the Minister as he could, and so powerful was the impression made upon his mind by his benign countenance, and the deep strain of fervent piety which flowed from his lips, that young Lavers eyed him with admiration and astonishment as though he were of a superior order of beings, and not one of earthly mould. His discourse was founded on Acts xxiv. 25: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee."

The fervency of the Minister's manner riveted his attention. He thought as he listened that he was the person particularly addressed, and his whole frame shook with fear and apprehension, whilst he conceived that the Minister's eye was constantly fixed upon him. Notwithstanding these painful convictions, he found his heart insensibly drawn towards him, so that had he been invited, he felt he could have followed him to any part of the world. Unhappily the young convert neglected to cherish these serious impressions, and to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience: no marvel, therefore, that his volatile spirit again sought enjoyment amongst his worldly associates. The convictions he then received, however, were never from that interesting era entirely effaced: and when, as was his custom, he rose early to pray, read his Bible, and Baxter's "Saints' Rest," which had lately been put into his hands, his former feelings and resolutions revived.

After the lapse of some months, having risen early one morning for the purposes of devotion, the thought

suddenly darted into his mind that the fair would be held that day : he immediately felt powerfully tempted to visit that scene of carnal merriment, notwithstanding the remonstrances of conscience. Had he at once resisted, crying to the Lord for strength, he had prevailed ; but he parleyed with the tempter, and consequently fell.

It has been well said, that indecision stands like a door half open, and tempts the tempter ; whilst resolution bolts the door, and, by resisting, causes him to flee. Ignorant of the devices of Satan, and neglecting the duty of self-examination, he had imperceptibly departed in heart from the living God ; the heavenly visitant had doubtless been grieved, and the strong man armed had, previously to that unhappy morning, regained somewhat of his former ascendancy.

Resolved to transgress, although conscious that the eye of God was upon him, he yet dreaded the observation of a pious neighbour, to whom he had frequently communicated his religious experience. Satan, having gained his assent to this act of transgression, now assisted him in its execution, by suggesting that if he associated with a party who were enlisted in the same service, he should escape detection in the crowd. But although he eluded the observation of his neighbour, he soon found he could not run away from himself, nor escape the reproaches of conscience. He had scarcely reached the place, when he pungently felt that the way of transgressors is hard ; for the judgment of God appeared to follow him, and he feared every moment lest the ground should open and swallow him up. He soon returned in agony of spirit, ashamed and confounded ; nor could he find courage to relieve his mind by telling his convictions to the pious friend whom he had so recently deceived.

From this time, we are informed there was manifest declension in his experience : his attention to secret duties, although at no period wholly given up, was

considerably relaxed ; and he once more endeavoured to find happiness in the company of his former gay and thoughtless companions. In this hazardous condition he appears to have continued for many months, the subject of that alternation of feeling which, except the heart be hardened and grown callous by wilful and reiterated transgression, is the ordinary experience of such as are gradually departing from the Lord. At some seasons, conscience, resuming her seat, wrote self-condemnation on his conduct and dissatisfaction on every object from which he sought delusive pleasure ; at others, the value of the favour of God, and the calm delight connected with the pursuit of true religion, beamed upon his mind with somewhat of their former brightness.

At this critical juncture, God, who is rich in mercy, excited in the hearts of some of his faithful followers a lively interest in behalf of this stray sheep, leading them to the adoption of those means which proved successful in restoring him again to the fold, and in effecting a union both with the chief Shepherd and with the flock, which proved decisive and permanent. A relative, residing at Dartmouth, meeting him one day in the village, in an affectionate but solemn tone accosted him with the inquiry, "William, do you ever pray ?" and proceeded to warn him of the dangerous consequences of indecision, of the evil of light and worldly company, and concluded by earnestly entreating him at once to renounce the world and sin, and to seek his happiness in God. This kind and forcible address, given by one who felt and manifested the power and blessedness of the course he recommended, made a deep impression on William's heart ; and he returned home to meditate seriously on his condition, and to implore the grace of God to enable him to put in practice the resolution he had formed of henceforth making the salvation of his soul his one great object.

The light that had partially illumined the mind of this returning prodigal, and which, had he walked in it, would sooner have dissipated the remaining darkness, now penetrated the secrets of his heart, manifesting to him his real character. Being led to examine his condition by the unerring rule of Scripture, he discovered, to his shame and grief, that he was lost and ruined. That Spirit "which searcheth all things," caused him to feel that, although he had experienced compunction for sin, had become reformed in conduct, and had attended to the duties of religion, he was still in a state of condemnation, and justly exposed to God's righteous indignation. He saw that his future life, even although it should be one of perfect obedience to the law of God, could never atone for a single transgression, or entitle him to the divine favour. But he also discovered that the curse he had justly incurred had fallen on the head of his Divine Surety; that "the Lord had laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" and that through faith in his all-sufficient atonement, and through that alone, he might find pardon and peace with God.

He at the same time perceived that in order to experience a complete salvation, he must be sanctified as well as justified; and he was led to welcome the full provision made for that holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Although young Lavers had been previously the subject of strong convictions as well as of the drawings of the Spirit, he had not as yet learned "the exceeding sinfulness of sin;" and when the sentence of condemnation was written on his heart, his distress became too poignant to be concealed, and his countenance and voice betrayed the agony within. His parents, ignorant of the source and nature of his sorrow, were no less grieved than astonished at his behaviour. In vain did he assure them that he was under no delusion, and

urge with earnestness the necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come ; like righteous Lot, when warning his sons-in-law to escape from the destruction denounced on the cities of the plain, "he seemed to them as one that mocked."

The association of our ideas is so forcible, that we easily become the subjects of local attachment, as well as of aversion. Hence the spot where we first drew the vital air, or were shielded from some impending danger, receives from its connexion with those circumstances a peculiar charm, and is ever after identified in the mind with the benefit there imparted. No wonder, then, that the place where the captive to sin and Satan first listened to the glad tidings of a Deliverer, should be endeared to him with an intensity of holy delight, analogous to that with which pious Simeon thought of the second temple, where he had taken in his arms the incarnate Saviour. When we also consider that in the gradations of love and esteem, the highest is awarded by the new disciple to him who has proved the instrument of his conversion, we shall cease to wonder that our young convert sought amongst the Wesleyans the communion of saints ; and that he soon became zealously attached both to the Ministers and to the Society.

Accordingly from this time he became exemplary for his diligent and serious attendance on the means of grace, and endeavoured to persuade his young companions and neighbours to bear him company. His cousin, who watched over him with tender solicitude, perceiving the increasing interest he manifested in the things of God, urged him, as a means of growing in grace and knowledge, to unite himself with the Lord's people. This kind friend, well knowing the difficulties which his young relative would have to encounter, and that the greatest opposition might be expected from his own family, deemed it important that he should not be left to the danger which so many willingly incur, of

standing alone in religion. He was affectionately urged to meet in class, whereby, in addition to the advice and encouragement of his fellow-members, he would secure the superintendence and prayers of a pious and experienced Leader. This judicious counsel he shortly after followed: and as the result, a deeper and more scriptural experience was soon apparent.

About this period, he one night awoke his brother, with lamentations expressive of the sorrow which at times still weighed upon his heart, crying out, "O, brother, I am a great sinner! Is there indeed mercy for me? How shall I escape the judgment of God?" Being overheard by his mother, she entered his room, when, instead of endeavouring to soothe and comfort him, she implored him to leave his serious ways and acquaintance, adding, "Your father and I expected some comfort in you; but you are lately grown so grave and particular, you will scarcely do anything that we wish you." "My dear mother," replied this affectionate son, "I would willingly do anything in my power to please you both, but I dare not risk the loss of my soul."

Mr. Lavers now began to enter experimentally into the meaning of that Scripture, "As many as will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution;" and it will be readily conceived, whilst his faith and love supported him under poignant suffering for his attachment to the Lord and to his people, that it was rendered still more severe as proceeding from those whom he both loved and honoured. It appears to have been the climax of the Saviour's description of suffering for his sake, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matt. x. 36.)

Knowing submission to the will of his parents to be his duty, he yielded to them in every point which did not affect the welfare of his soul, but where that was concerned, he was fully resolved, by the grace of God,

to act up to the dictates of his conscience. The threats of his father, and the tears and entreaties of his mother, who intimated that by the course he was pursuing he would bring the family to ruin, availed not to deter him for one moment from his purpose, yet he felt the latter so keenly that he found his only safety in flight. The period now arrived when he was called upon to renounce his connexion with the people of God, or to sacrifice his present comforts and future prospects by banishment from his father's dwelling. Returning one evening from the chapel, he found the door closed against him; and, after fruitless endeavours to gain admittance, was obliged to seek shelter under the hospitable roof of a friend who had kindly promised to receive him should his father carry his threats into execution. Even then, and for many years after, a high sense of duty led him studiously to conceal the unkind treatment he had received; nor would any motive, short of affording comfort and encouragement to such as may be called to make a similar sacrifice, have induced the mention of it even at so remote a period. Being accustomed to no other occupation than that of assisting his father in the farm, as occasion required, he must have felt most keenly his destitute condition on being thus cruelly expelled from his home. But so graciously did the Lord cause the consolations of his Spirit to abound in this trying ordeal, that he has been heard to say he experienced at that critical period a happiness of which till then he had no conception; his joy was full, and his cup ran over with blessing; so that he could with propriety adopt the language of the poet,—

“New songs of praise my lips employ,
And dances my glad heart for joy.”

When the clouds are surcharged with rain, they empty themselves on the parched earth; and when the soul is filled with the love of Christ, it pants to distil it on the

fallow ground of the sinner's heart. Hence this young convert was found on the day following his banishment, reading the Bible and praying with a cottager's family in the neighbourhood. An aged man, whose steps Providence had directed there, listened with deep attention, and entreated him to call the next day at the same hour. This led to similar invitations, and he was soon engaged in visiting from house to house, to expound the word of God and pray with the inmates.

That God whose favour he highly prized, and in whose service he delighted, appeared so manifestly for him in providence, that he had occasion to appropriate the language of the Psalmist, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Relations previously unmindful of him, proved such real friends in this time of need, that one justly observed, "That was a good day on which William joined the Methodists;" nor was this goodness limited to the supply of his individual wants, but, as will appear in the sequel, he was blessed with the means of assisting his parents when reduced in their old age by a reverse of fortune.

Mr. Lavers was about nineteen years of age when he fully united himself to the Methodist society. He was naturally of a sanguine temperament, and possessed great decision of character; qualities which, sanctified by the Spirit of God, laid the foundation for his high attainments in religion and subsequent ministerial success. He now began to take a part in meetings for prayer and religious exercises with an earnestness and zeal which arrested the attention and excited the expectations of many.

Early in the year 1816, a Local Preacher in the Dartmouth circuit witnessing with delight his spirit of zeal and devotion, sent for him, with the twofold purpose of giving him some employment, and of forming a more correct judgment of his qualifications for further usefulness. The opinion he entertained that Mr. Lavers

possessed talents for the ministry was soon confirmed by the intercourse thus afforded him. He invited a few serious persons to his house, and informed his young friend that he must preach there that evening : to this mandate, finding no denial would be taken, he hesitatingly assented. The little company being assembled, he attempted for the first time to address them, in a connected discourse, from Eph. ii. 8, " For by grace ye are saved, through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God." A favourable impression was made on the minds of those present, and Mr. Lavers was encouraged to proceed in a work most dear to his heart, and for the prosecution of which the Lord had prepared his way. His sphere as an exhorter soon became enlarged ; and the Lord did not suffer his word to fall to the ground.

At this period Mr. Lavers was received as a Local Preacher in the Brixham circuit, having gained the cordial welcome of his brethren, and reputably passed the accustomed examination. On these occasions, the heads of inquiry are, as to spirituality of mind and consistency of conduct ; an adequate knowledge of Scripture doctrines, as stated in the works of the venerable founder of Methodism, and the Rev. John Fletcher ; and, lastly, as to suitable talents for the work of the ministry.

Ample evidence might be adduced of his diligence and success in this humble department of the Gospel vineyard ; and, for many miles around, his praise was in the churches.

After a day passed in laborious occupation, he has frequently travelled to a great distance to proclaim to poor sinners the Gospel of Christ ; whilst his appointments on the Sabbath were frequently from ten to fifteen miles apart, where he usually preached twice and often thrice in the day.

His unwearied and diversified labours, and the ardency of his spirit, in the course of a few years, made

inroads on a naturally robust constitution ; his health visibly declined, and apprehensions were entertained that his race was nearly run. But it pleased the Lord to restore him to health and strength, which he so zealously devoted to the service of the church, that he soon became one of the most acceptable Preachers in the circuit. Doubtless this pre-eminence was not obtained without much prayer, diligence, and self-denial ; especially when we consider the few literary advantages he had enjoyed, and that he had to maintain himself by the exercise of some secular calling. His first care was to live very near to God, cultivating constant communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He improved every opportunity for perusing the sacred volume, and any books he could procure, calculated to throw light upon it ; his chief aim being to know the mind of the Spirit in his own word, that he might preach it as dictated by God himself. With a view to this object, it was his custom, when he had only a short season for needful refreshment, to employ a portion of it in reading the Bible on his knees, with earnest prayer for divine teaching.

From the time Mr. Lavers was renewed in the spirit of his mind, he not only set apart one day in the week for humiliation and prayer, with fasting, but he also observed a special season whenever he felt conscious of any heart-departure from the Lord, or as often as any circumstance of a painful nature occurred in the church. When Zion languished, he mourned over her as in sackcloth and ashes ; and he would frequently remark, that when we have suffered spiritual declension, we ought never to break our fast until we are again reconciled to God, and enjoy an assurance of his favour. How vigorously would the church of Christ flourish, and “her fruit shake as Lebanon,” if such were the experience and conduct of all her members !

This servant of God was then occupied in his own immediate neighbourhood ; and the effects consequent on such a state of mind and course of conduct were, that the Lord made him an instrument of the conversion of many souls : of strengthening the weak, and comforting the mourners ; whilst his own soul, in these labours of love, was abundantly watered from on high.

The following incident may serve to illustrate his spirituality of mind, and his warm attachment to Zion, and to Zion's God. On reaching the chapel one evening at the hour of prayer, he found the doors closed. After waiting in vain for the assembling of the people, their lukewarmness deeply affected him ; he obtained the key, and entering the chapel, continued for some time in humiliation and earnest prayer to God on their behalf. This proved a season never to be forgotten ; for the Lord so richly filled him with his Spirit, that he felt constrained to declare with the Psalmist, "Thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over." This testimony he gave in a love-feast the following week, and so manifest was the holy rapture with which it was accompanied, that one who was present termed it the nearest approach he had witnessed to that joy which the Apostle has described as "unspeakable, and full of glory." Nor was the blessed influence confined to himself, for during the public service which closed the following Sabbath, a divine power accompanied his message, and not a few now on their way to Zion, still refer to that season as to one worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance.

To be wholly devoted to the great work of preaching the Gospel became now the object of his intense desire ; and when he considered the field of labour, the coldness of some and the indifference of others to their best interests, he ardently longed for a freedom from all secular engagements, that he might make "full proof of his ministry ;" and the Lord, from whose good

Spirit this desire proceeded, whilst preparing him as a fit instrument for the work, was at the same time opening a way for its accomplishment.

The important change effected in Mr. Lavers's character and experience, although but initial, was not the less real and decisive. Whilst tracing it primarily to the free grace of God as its source, the intermediate causes constituting so many links in the chain of divine providence, and the conduct of the subject of this change, may justly claim our consideration. How apparently trivial a circumstance was that of a lady casually recommending "The Pilgrim's Progress," and yet it appears to have excited in his heart the first desire he felt to become a pilgrim.

The conduct of one of his relatives presents us with additional evidence that Christianity is a religion of benevolence. Unlike many, who virtually inquire, "Am I my brother's keeper?" he failed not to admonish, watch over him, and encourage in him the first dawn of conviction, and subsequent pious resolution. But the implantation of that germ of grace which proved so vigorous and productive, must be attributed as its chief instrument to a faithfully-preached Gospel. It was from an itinerant Minister, whose lips had been "touched with a live coal from off the altar," that our young convert received the Gospel, "not as the word of man," but as it was in truth, "the word of God."

The introduction and organization of Methodism might justly have awakened joy and gratitude on earth, and have tuned to higher notes of praise the harps of angels and glorified spirits above, were it only for this one trophy it obtained of the Redeemer's power to save; still more as we mark the fruit he gathered as he pursued his course; but above all, when the many sheaves which, through successive ages, this one grain of wheat proved instrumental in producing, shall be housed in the heavenly garner.

Since the Holy Ghost himself commends and exhibits for our imitation the faith of an Abraham, the decision of a Ruth, and the early piety of a Josiah and a Timothy, we shall not err in dwelling with admiring gratitude on the grace of Christ, manifested in his young disciple; in the hope that all who peruse the narrative may, in their respective spheres, profit by his example.

Ease, and a competent provision, the magic charm of home, with the favour and affection of his parents, were no inconsiderable sacrifices to be made by one so young and inexperienced, independently of the hardships, reproach, and persecution he might have to encounter; but the Saviour having revealed himself in his heart, like the great Apostle, "he conferred not with flesh and blood," neither was he "disobedient to the heavenly vision." He felt that the turning-point, the hour of decision, had arrived, and with a determination similar to that of Ruth, he bade a long farewell to Moab, and resolutely set out for Canaan, resolved to seek the God of Israel amongst the Israel of God. He did what all must do, at least in spirit, who would emulate his usefulness and share in his reward; having counted the cost, he cheerfully "suffered the loss of all things," anticipating a full "recompense at the resurrection of the just."

In this conduct we see illustrated the vast importance of decision of character, founded upon Christian principles. We may also learn that opposition, which generally deters the undecided, will often add nerve and vigour to the resolute, as the violent wind which blows out the feeble flame will serve only to increase a stronger fire.

We see portrayed in the persecution which William Lavers experienced from his family, the enmity of the carnal mind against Christ, and his image in his saints. The faithfulness of God was at the same time exemplified

in the temporal provision and the spiritual joy and consolation afforded to his devoted servant, who, in accordance with the Saviour's promise, received " manifold more in this present time," with the assurance and earnest of everlasting life.

In conclusion, a review of the instruments employed in effecting this blessed change, is calculated to lead to inquiries like the following in every reflecting mind :—Am I a connecting link in the chain of mercy ? Am I engaged in extending the kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of Satan ? since He who is truth itself hath declared, " He that is not with me is *against* me, and he that gathereth not with me, *scattereth*."

CHAPTER II.

His call to the ministry.—He is instrumental in erecting a Chapel in his native village.—His appointment to Dartmouth.—His call to labour at Ashburton.—His removal to Maidstone.

It is asserted by one of our own poets, that the overruling providence of God

“ Makes each man fall
Just in the niche that he was doom'd to fill.”

This truth applies with peculiar emphasis to all who are called to labour in the Lord's vineyard, since the great Head of the Church who holdeth those stars in his right hand, both fixes their orbits and appoints their revolutions. Nor is it less certain that God has, in his wisdom, established a connexion between their states and circumstances, and the sphere in which he designs them to move, including the results consequent upon their labours. Hence they prove the safest counsellors who have passed through the greatest difficulties; and the best comforters are those who have themselves been the subjects of affliction and sorrow.

After this manner the Lord, in the counsel of his will, was preparing the subject of this memoir for that appropriate course of ministerial duty in the exercise of which he was so eminently successful.

It was early in the year 1823 that the Rev. Mr. Edwards, the Superintendent, questioned him on his views relative to that important work. After stating that he possessed a strong desire to be devoted to the service of the sanctuary, he added, “ I am in the hands of the church, to be employed when and where they

may think fit to send me." His character and labours being fully known and appreciated, he was proposed at the March quarterly meeting, and unanimously approved of to be recommended to the Conference for the regular ministry. In May following, in accordance with the rules of the society, he was proposed at the district meeting held at Launceston ; but not attending there on account of the distance, another meeting was called at Plymouth.

Mr. Lavers having passed this examination, as well as a subsequent one prior to the Conference, his name was inserted as an Itinerant Preacher on the list of reserve. He was not one of those who run before they are sent. He published not the word of reconciliation till he was himself reconciled to God by Jesus Christ ; he proclaimed not the joyful tidings till "a burning coal from the altar had touched his lips, and his iniquity was removed, and his sin expiated." (Isai. vi. 6, 7 ; *Bp. Lowth's Translation.*) Soon after his return to Blackauton, he called upon a friend at Dartmouth, where he met the Superintendent, and intimated a desire, long secretly cherished, of seeing a chapel erected in his native village.

The Rev. Mr. Edwards entered warmly into the design, and encouraged him to proceed in so good a work, by giving him full liberty to open a subscription for the purpose. With the ardour which was natural to him, he immediately proceeded to take vigorous measures in the prosecution of his object, not calculating upon the opposition with which he would meet, and the difficulties he would have to surmount. The Lord, however, so disposed the hearts of many to whom application was made for pecuniary assistance, that Mr. Lavers and his coadjutors soon found themselves in circumstances which justified their proceeding to build.

The site fixed upon for the projected building, was

the spot on which he had first listened to a Gospel sermon. Contrary to all expectation, that piece of ground had lately fallen into the hands of a poor man, who, on being applied to, consented to dispose of it for the erection of a Wesleyan chapel. The contract was closed, a deposit paid down, and an agreement entered into with a person in the neighbourhood to supply stones for the building, before any tidings reached the ears of a principal person in the parish, who, ignorant that "the work was of God," strove to defeat it by carnal weapons.

The first step this person took, was to call upon the poor man who held the land, whom by threats or entreaties he induced to decline ratifying his engagement; he proceeded next to the proprietor of the quarry, on whom he prevailed to refuse the stipulated supply; and, finally, all his influence was exerted to prevent the inhabitants contributing in any way to the forwarding of the object. But that God who appeared so conspicuously on behalf of the zealous Nehemiah, and suffered not Tobiah and Sanballat with their hired band to obstruct the rebuilding of the temple, was with his young servant, raising up friends to succour him, and giving him favour in their eyes, whilst engaged in erecting a house to his name.

Whilst perambulating the neighbourhood to solicit contributions, a letter was put into his hands from Mr. Harris, of Stoke, inviting him to call at his house as early as possible. Thither he immediately repaired, and was no sooner introduced, than that gentleman saluted him with uplifted hands, and those encouraging words, "All things work together for good to them that love God;" and proceeded to inform him, that he was fully acquainted with his history, and the persecution he had suffered in the cause he had so warmly espoused, adding, "I have two quarries of my own, one of stones, the other of tiles; and whatever you may require of

either is at your service, free of expense." The refusal of the owner of the land to fulfil his engagement was the only remaining obstacle in commencing the work our young Minister had so much at heart, which, from the opposition it met with, became an object of great offence to some, and of cordial advocacy on the part of others.

This impediment which Mr. Lavers saw no means of overcoming was shortly afterwards removed by his being unexpectedly introduced to a pious solicitor, who immediately adopted the proper measures to enforce the fulfilment of the contract. Having informed the owner of the validity of the instrument, and warned him of the consequences of further opposition, he reluctantly fulfilled the terms of his agreement.

All things being thus, under the control of a gracious over-ruling Providence, made ready, this servant of the Most High, after the manner of the nobles engaged in rebuilding the temple, as recorded in the book of Nehemiah, not only encouraged the workmen, but *built with them*. Like them, he commenced the work with humiliation and fasting; and, whilst prosecuting it, he wielded that potent weapon of prayer, which engaged the presence of the Most High, and threw around them the shield of his protection.

Notwithstanding the opposition which the cause excited, a deep interest was felt and manifested by very many on its behalf. When the foundation was laid, great numbers from the immediate vicinity and from a considerable distance were assembled at the service, who listened with deep attention, during a heavy rain, to a discourse delivered on the occasion by the Rev. Mr. Henshaw.

During the progress of the work, one of their opponents formed a device against the zealous leader of this little band, the subtlety of which was exceeded only by its cruelty; whilst its discovery and defeat displayed

in conspicuous characters his need of the divine *Ægis*, and its all-sufficiency for his defence.

This secret enemy to the Lord and to his church had observed, as the building rose, that Mr. Lavers was always the first at his post in the morning; and when it was carried up almost to its height, availed himself of an opportunity of so nearly severing the cords which confined the stage on which the men worked to the scaffold-poles, that whoever first stepped upon it must have been precipitated to the ground, at the imminent hazard of his life. But that gracious God who prompted Nehemiah to escape the snare which Sanballat laid to betray him to his destruction on the plain of Ano, and the hypocritical counsel of Shemaiah which would have sacrificed him in the temple; in one of the numerous ways by which he holds the feet of his saints, caused his servant to discover the latent snare, in time to escape the threatened destruction. The individual who perpetrated this design subsequently confessed that Mr. Lavers was the intended victim.

The Lord, who looked with approving favour on this humble effort of his servants, and on the house they were building to record his name, so protected and blessed them, that it was raised without accident. He gave them favour also in the sight of the people; many of whom sent their carts and horses, whilst others proffered their labour to bring the stones and building materials, and in various ways to assist in the erection with a cheerfulness and alacrity none can conceive who have not been eye-witnesses of the effects produced where God gives, as he did to the Jews of old, "a mind to the work."

Thus, notwithstanding open hostility and secret machinations, was this house built in perilous times; on the front of which was inscribed the characteristic name, "Ebenezer;" and over the pulpit, the appropriate motto, "What hath God wrought?"

and, like the restored temple, it was dedicated amidst the joyful acclamations of the servants of the Most High, with the sacrifices of prayer, of praise, and of thanksgiving.

In the spring of the year 1829, when Mr. Lavers again visited the scene of his early labours after a lengthened absence, he took with him a dial for this chapel, which he presented as a thank-offering to the God of his mercies, who had restored him to comparative health and strength, and on whom he had relied to be brought again to his father's house in peace.

Mr. Lavers having hailed the completion of this house of prayer, was called out to labour in the Brixham circuit till the next Conference ; when he bade a final adieu to all secular employment, and devoted himself exclusively to the service of the sanctuary.

It was in the summer of 1832 that Mr. Lavers received his first call to the Wesleyan ministry, in consequence of which he removed to Dartmouth ; where he continued till the ensuing Conference.

Before we accompany this devoted servant of God to his next scene of labour, some few remarks from persons who knew and appreciated his worth may be acceptable to the reader, descriptive of his character and deportment as a Minister of the Gospel. Upon this subject, a Local Preacher then in the Brixham circuit, writes as follows:—

“ In the cause of the Redeemer, Mr. Lavers was instant in season and out of season ; preaching the Gospel as well out of the pulpit as in it ; indeed, his ardent and vigorous mind would never suffer him to rest, and *a greater enemy to his kingdom of darkness I believe Satan never had.* With him sanctification was not a mere term, but a divine reality ; and he powerfully commended it by his spirit, as well as with his lips. He dealt not in the false commerce of unfelt truth, but in that which he himself had tasted, and felt, and handled

of the word of life. His excellencies I can never forget, and I trust ever to be animated by the recollection of his example."

"When I first commenced speaking in public," I have heard him say, "I was the weakest of the weak, and to hear me preach must have been to many no small trial of their patience."

The following remarks, from the same pen, may afford encouragement to those subject to similar feelings, who may conceive an entire emancipation from them unattainable :—

"Shortly after Dartmouth had been annexed to the Brixham circuit, it came to his turn to preach for us. The chapel being considerably larger than any in which he had engaged, he informed me that the very sight of the pulpit made him tremble in every limb, and his timidity was such that for a season he felt as though it was utterly impossible he could perform the service. 'But,' said he, 'that sweet promise, *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, gave me some little comfort, and when I had ascended the pulpit, thoughts of the Saviour's dying love, and that in his members, as in their exalted Head, the suffering must precede the glory, supported my drooping spirits, whilst the following lines were powerfully brought to my mind,—

Fix'd on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail, and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away :
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.'"

One other testimonial may suffice. It is that of Mr. Sutcliffe, of Dartmouth :—

"My acquaintance with our esteemed brother commenced in the year 1819. I reflect with much satisfaction on the time I was privileged to sit under his

ministry, which I generally found very profitable. I feel it is but justice to state, that, under God, I received my first spiritual good through his instrumentality. I believe that many more both in this and the neighbouring circuits can testify of the saving benefit they derived from his faithful exhortations. As a man, I always found him open and sincere. As a Christian, it was his constant study and prayer that he might be an Israelite indeed. I recollect, whilst in this circuit, his writing to a friend who had made some reflections unfavourable to his character, in which, after showing that they were groundless, he made the following solemn appeal, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' It was indeed a primary object with him to 'keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.' "

In October, 1823, Mr. Lavers was sent by the President of the Conference to Ashburton, in the Exeter district, to supply the place of the junior Minister, who, having been set apart for the Missionary work, was about to embark for a foreign station. Being rather unexpectedly called to enter upon the itinerancy, Mr. Lavers was somewhat straitened in making the arrangements requisite for entering upon his privileged office. The embarrassment, though transient, pressed much upon his mind, until, in answer to prayer, the Lord supplied his wants, and he has subsequently declared, that from that period to the close of his pilgrimage, although his prospects were sometimes dark, he was never suffered to want those things which were requisite. It was at this time that we find, in one of his letters to a friend, the acknowledgment of a liberal present of books from Mr. Harris, of Stoke, who so kindly encouraged him in the erection of the chapel at Blackauton.

We find also the most humiliating expressions of his

own unworthiness and incompetency for the work, when contrasted with the superior knowledge and experience of those fathers in Christ with whom he was privileged to co-operate, and still more when he compared his low attainments with the gifts and graces essential to the faithful discharge of that high and holy calling. But his dependence was upon that Saviour whose grace was sufficient for him, whilst he expected it in the appointed channel of the mutual prayers of the true Israel, which he implored in the first discourse he delivered before the quarterly meeting, from 2 Thess. iii. 1 : " Brethren, pray for us." The answer to their prayers he realized in the affectionate welcome and cordial assistance afforded him by the society, both with regard to his individual comfort and his ministerial labours. His spiritual progress and subsequent usefulness were in no small degree attributable to the watchful care, scriptural instruction, and holy example of the Superintendents under whose fostering wings this young Timothy was nursed and cherished.

Of the excellent man who sustained that office in the Ashburton district, Mr. Lavers speaks as follows :—

" I cannot be sufficiently thankful for so kind and judicious a Superintendent : he manages everything so well : he lays down the line by which I am to walk, and we go on our way rejoicing. Truly both Mr. and Mrs. Sanders manifest towards me the solicitude and affection of parents. We have here an humble, earnest, praying people, and to me they have shown the greatest kindness. Thus I find many privileges, united with much duty, and some crosses. May the Lord add, as the crowning blessing, the gift of more love to perishing souls."

A letter written at this time, to his cousin at Dartmouth, will evince the state of his mind, and the ardour with which he prosecuted his important duties :—

• Ashburton, February 10th, 1824.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

WHEN you execute my commission to Mrs. —, say to her from me, that I hope she is no longer a servant, but a child. If my voice could reach her, I would cry in her hearing, "Behold the Lamb!" When addressing penitents, I find my heart greatly enlarged. I know something by experience of mental suffering for the souls of others, and am fully determined to spend and be spent for those whom Jesus died to save. My soul now lives in him. Let me go where he sends me, let me do what he commands me; for "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." His law of love not only requires but imparts strength for obedience. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has brought me an entire freedom from the law of sin and death. Alas! how long have I loitered in the heavenly course. We are invited to go up, and possess the good land. I believe both you and Sarah have tasted of the grace of God; still our highest conceptions of what the Lord is ready to bestow upon us are very inadequate, for it is "above all that we ask or think." Let us expect and hope for "all the fulness of God." This it is that defies the tempter, smiles at the storm, challenges the King of terrors, and triumphs over the tomb! Invite H—— to seek with us a present rest: the Master calleth for her, and the way is easy. Tell her his command is, "Stretch forth thine hand." She must not say that it is impossible, for it is withered; hence He who gave the command, if she be willing, will also give the power. Let her try to stretch it forth. Faith acts upon Christ, and draws from his fulness; hence "all things are possible to him that believeth."

We have had joyful tidings, especially from Redruth, but when will they sound forth from us? Let us live more

holily, pray with more faith, and be instant in speaking for God. Remember your question to me, "William, do you ever pray?" "A word spoken in season, how good is it!" God will not honour us if we fear man rather than him, or prefer our ease to his glory. I am anxious to know if any new stations are put upon your plan, and to receive tidings of Stoke and Imarage. Might not something be attempted at Washburton, or Bow-bridge? I have lately preached more than once from Acts ii. 17, 18, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," when I have noticed the late revivals, to animate and encourage us. Holy Father, "Let thy kingdom come!" Remember me affectionately to the little flock at Kingswear. I hope they stand fast in the Lord.

Yours, my dear Cousin, most truly,

W. L.

P.S. Keep the glorious prize continually in view : it is not far distant : only fight a little longer, and the crown of righteousness will be yours.

Notwithstanding the short period of Mr. Lavers's residence at Ashburton, there is not wanting satisfactory evidence that the Lord was with him and his revered colleague, and he suffered not their words to fall to the ground. With immediate reference to the subject of the memoir, a lady, now living in Devonshire, writes as follows :—

"During his stay at Ashburton he passed much of his time at my house, which afforded me frequent opportunities of seeing him, and that under varied circumstances. Deep humility was a striking feature in his character : this was manifested both by the very diffident manner in which he spoke of his qualifications for the ministry, and his earnest request to the Lord's people, urged both in public and private, that they

would entreat for him wisdom from above, in order faithfully and successfully to perform the work of an evangelist. Devotion appeared to be his element. He would often say, 'I know I have much to do abroad, but my soul is so blessed while searching the Scriptures, and holding communion with my God, that I scarcely know how to leave the room.' I have seen him deeply exercised in consequence of severe trials which had befallen his family, but his faith was always vigorous, and the Lord graciously appeared on their behalf. He was a zealous reprover of sin, nor would he suffer it in any one without faithfully yet affectionately admonishing them; and when he perceived any one wandering from the fold, or relaxing in duty, he would watch over and endeavour to reclaim him, as one 'that must give account.' This must often have cost him much, as his natural disposition was peculiarly amiable and affectionate. With respect to his general deportment, both in public and private, I saw much to admire, but never anything to condemn.

• "In zeal for his Divine Master's glory, he surpassed most that I have met with. I have often known him walk five miles out on a Lord's-day's morning to preach before breakfast, and then return and preach three times in Ashburton chapel. Many times when he has returned late at night from a distance, I have told him if he exerted himself so much he would soon ruin his naturally vigorous constitution; he would answer, 'Consider what a blessed Master I serve; and I hope while life shall last to spend and be spent for him.' He was in the habit of preaching seven times a week, besides attending schools, society-meetings, &c., &c. Truly 'he was a good man, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and much people was added to the Lord.' I heard him preach with profit as well as with pleasure, and in the few months he was with us he gathered many, all of whom will, I trust, be his crown of

rejoicing in the day when the Lord shall make up his jewels."

It was at the close of March, 1824, that Mr. Lavers was appointed to the Maidstone circuit, whither, after a short visit to his aged parents, he proceeded, and took up his abode at Headcorn, nine miles distant from Maidstone. He regretted leaving Ashburton, chiefly because he was thereby deprived of the society and counsel of Mr. Sanders, who had proved to him a spiritual father. But the Lord, in his mercy, suffered him not to be a loser by the exchange; for, in the Rev. Mr. Bryant, our young Minister found a faithful friend and an able instructor. It was well for him and for those amongst whom he was called to labour, that he diligently improved those golden opportunities, since they proved but of short duration. In the course of two or three months after his arrival at this station, Mr. Bryant was attacked by a disorder for which the Faculty recommended him to try the air of Devonshire, the charge of the circuit therefore devolved on the junior Minister until the ensuing Conference.

The period of his ministry in conjunction with Mr. Bryant passed in sweet and uninterrupted harmony. It is no inconsiderable proof of his unwearied application to the duties of his office, that notwithstanding he was stationed at a distance of nine miles from the head of the circuit, all his engagements were punctually discharged. Nor could his ardent spirit be confined within any circle of prescribed duty. Hence it was his custom, at Headcorn, to devote one day in the week to the distribution of tracts, and visiting the abodes of penury and sickness, whilst the Saturday afternoon was occupied in instructing the children of the congregation. The poor he sought out, and with them he might be said to dwell; nor were their children less dear to his heart, or less the objects of his watchful care. The

friend to whom the writer is indebted for these traits of his character add, that many were brought savingly to God under his ministry, especially from amongst the young.

With a view to the more efficient performance of the important functions of the ministerial office, Mr. Lavers removed to Maidstone. Here, after the day had been devoted to its various duties, he would sometimes pass the silent hours of the night in prayer, and meditation on the Scriptures, and not unfrequently lie down in his clothes, lest wearied nature should exact the needed period of rest, and prevent his waking at once to light and labour. As the reward of his zeal and devotedness, he obtained, in a large measure, the regard and affection of the people, and numerous were the proofs of their Christian esteem which he experienced; but that which afforded him the highest gratification was their cordial and unanimous invitation, at the close of the second year's labours, to continue among them a third year.

• But since the statement of one fact often affords a more satisfactory illustration of character than pages occupied in enumerating the virtues which adorned it, the following communication is adduced as one of a series of efforts for the conversion of souls, which might with truth be said to comprise the history of this zealous labourer in the Gospel vineyard. The individual who narrates it has for some years occupied a station of ministerial usefulness in the Methodist Connexion:—

“It was in the summer of 1824 that I first became acquainted with that devoted servant of Christ, Mr. Lavers: he was then in the Maidstone circuit, and in his journeys he occasionally stopped to preach at the village of Mereworth, where I resided. I was introduced to him by a pious man, in whose house the Ministers were accustomed to dispense the word of life. Of the nature of true religion I was at that time wholly

ignorant. In our first interview, he represented to me, with equal tenderness and fidelity, my real state as under the dominion of sin and Satan, being without hope and without God in the world. But for his kind instructions and prayers, the probability is that I should have continued in the same wretched condition to this day. He saw my state, and warned me of it: he knew my danger, and it excited his sympathy and compassion. The great plan of salvation, through faith in an atoning Saviour, he urged with such affectionate solicitude, that I could not avoid giving him an attentive hearing, which led me to serious consideration.

“At that time I conducted a school under a patronage which I could scarcely expect to retain, in the event of uniting with the Methodists. Mr. Lavers evinced his sympathy by kindly promising me what aid his resources and influence could afford; but he failed not to urge me to decide for God and to unite with the society. Several months had elapsed from the time of our first interview, during which my understanding had become enlightened on the subject both of Christian duty and privilege. In this state I sought the Lord with frequent and earnest prayer. He was found of me, and I was constrained to sing with the Psalmist, ‘He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my foot upon a rock,’ &c. Looking to that Rock of salvation for strength, I resolved, at whatever cost, to be on the Lord’s side, and accordingly on the 6th of January, 1825, I joined the Methodist society. I soon discovered that those who would follow the Saviour must bear his reproach; being obliged, as I had anticipated, to leave the village in order to obtain a maintenance. My faithful adviser stood by me in this trying season, and not only assisted me to the utmost of his power, but manifested towards me that deep sympathy and concern which will ever live in my remembrance. For such offices he was peculiarly qualified;

for having himself 'suffered as a Christian,' and an exile, he 'knew the heart of a stranger.' It was not long before the Lord, in his providence, opened my way to a congenial employment, and enabled me to glorify him for my deliverance. Thus was an acquaintance formed with this man of God which proved one of my greatest blessings, since it ripened into a friendship which continued inviolate until his early removal to the realms of day."

From various testimonies as to Mr. Lavers's usefulness in the Maidstone circuit, the following are selected, upon the principle that those who have drunk of the stream can best describe the fountain.

The Rev. W. H. Rule, who for a time filled Mr. Bryant's station, and who is now engaged in the Mediterranean Mission, thus writes:—

"During the time I was in that circuit, we were frequently together, and his example and conversation were peculiarly profitable to me. I am indebted to him for many valuable hints on the qualifications and the deportment requisite in one devoted to the sacred and responsible office of the ministry. His counsel owed much of its efficacy to the humility and brotherly-kindness with which it was imparted. In every company he evinced the faculty of introducing with ease such topics as tended to edification; his chief aim being the spiritual benefit of all with whom he associated. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, our esteemed brother exhibited in rich abundance the fruits of righteousness. He was eminent for persevering fidelity; nor could any consideration ever induce him to desert his post; regarding himself, to borrow one of his favourite allusions, 'as a victim bound to the horns of the altar.' It is the general opinion of those who knew him, that his health fell a sacrifice to his zeal for God in the conversion of sinners. Nor was he suffered

to labour in vain : multitudes at the last great day ' will arise and call him blessed,' themselves imperishable memorials of his ardent devotedness to the cause of the Redeemer."

The following is from the pen of the Rev. W. Box, for some years a Missionary in the West Indies :—

"As a Christian, 'holiness to the Lord' was his motto : and he bore its impress, being devoted to God in body, soul, and spirit ; and I firmly believe that he lived in the blessed enjoyment of that full salvation which 'no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.' In all his conversation and letters, the nature of perfect love, with the importance of obtaining it, formed a prominent topic ; and it was his great delight to associate with those who were aspiring after the fulness of this crowning grace of the Christian character. He appeared to possess, at all times, the indubitable evidence of his sonship ; and this strong confidence in the blood of the everlasting covenant gave him boldness at the mercy-seat, so that, as 'a Prince, he had power with God and prevailed.' He was eminently a man of prayer. This I consider to have been one of his greatest gifts, and eternity only will reveal the important and lasting blessings which have been communicated to numbers through his fervent and effectual supplications. Some there are now engaged in the arduous work of the ministry, who will never forget how often he retired with them to implore the gift of the Holy Spirit, in all his enlightening, directing, and sanctifying influences, to qualify them for the exercise of their important duties. He habitually walked and talked with God ; indeed, it might be said of him, that whether in private, in the social meeting, or in the sanctuary, prayer was made by him *continually*.

"Humility was a striking feature in his walk. He counted himself 'less than the least of all saints,' and

was content to be nothing, that Christ might be 'all in all.' I well remember his opening his commission at Maidstone, where he was welcomed by a salutation hymn, when he fell upon his knees, and under an almost overwhelming sense of conscious insufficiency for the great work, wrestled in earnest prayer for divine compassion and support, and subsequently entreated the prayers and co-operation of the society. In his communion with the saints especially, this grace appeared conspicuously, yet in perfect harmony, as occasion required, with the vindication of his conduct or the magnifying of his office.

"As a Minister of the Gospel, he was very acceptable and useful; and many souls given him as the fruit of his labours whilst at Maidstone, will prove his crown and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. His one object was to save sinners; and to accomplish this, whenever it appeared needful, he sacrificed manner, method, and embellishment. His views of divine truth were correct and lucid, searched out by himself from the deep and inexhaustible mine of holy Scripture. He well knew how to deal with the Pharisee, the Antinomian, the infidel, and the carnal professor; whilst for the careless sinner, the trembling penitent, and the humble believer, he had always a word in season, emanating from deep anxiety for their eternal welfare. Our departed friend possessed a peculiar talent for usefulness in the social circle and in pastoral visits. In these he was always received 'as the messenger of the church, and the glory of Christ,' and he entered with the most lively sympathy and deepest concern into the spiritual state and experience of his flock.

"The whole of his time and all his talents were sedulously employed both in the acquirement and in the communication of spiritual good. His ardent charity, holy vehemence, and incessant exertions, will never be forgotten by those to whose welfare they were devoted;

least of all by such as can estimate aright the value of a life engaged in the arduous enterprise of snatching souls as brands from the burning.

“ His attachment to his Christian friends was fervent and sincere, neither abated by time nor diminished by distance; and in many instances it was more firmly cemented by the faithful reproofs and timely cautions which he never failed to administer with meekness and discretion. His attention to the best interests of the rising generation was exemplary and constant; and in their service, as well as to benefit those of riper years, he laboured above his strength, ‘until the weary wheels of life stood still.’

“ By his early and lamented removal, the church has lost one of its strong and beauteous pillars; the society to which he was united, an able and devoted Minister; those who enjoyed his intimate acquaintance, a constant friend; and his bereaved widow, an affectionate and invaluable help-meet.”

The following testimony of the Rev. Edward Oakes, is at once so graphic and affective, as to require no preface:—

“ The affectionate regard which I shall ever entertain for the memory of our mutual friend and brother, Mr. Lavers, whose death many with ourselves have had cause to lament, would induce me to rise, even at midnight, and pay a just tribute to such departed worth. Happy shall I be if my pen can place his excellencies in their true light. My first acquaintance with him was at Maidstone. I was appointed Superintendent to that circuit in the year 1826, to fill the place of that excellent man, the Rev. J. Bryant, and here I met with Mr. Lavers. He had laboured with Mr. Bryant the preceding year, and was continued in the circuit a second year to be my companion and fellow-labourer. His reception of me was marked by all that warmth of

Christian feeling, with which a son would receive into his embrace a father, whose presence he had joyfully anticipated. I instantly saw, by his heavenly countenance, that I could most gladly welcome to my heart one whom the Lord had granted me the privilege of receiving for a season under my care. The first impressions which he made upon my mind were those of deep and growing piety, devotedness to the Lord, and ardent desire for the salvation of souls. A further acquaintance with him developed suitable talents for the important work of the ministry, a steady perseverance in mental improvement, and a willingness to spend and be spent for Christ and his Gospel.

“I was truly concerned that he continued with me but for one year, since I never had the least occasion to regret his appointment as my coadjutor in the ministry. I always found him affectionate, open-hearted, truly humble, prompt for every call of duty, and ever ready to perform any act of kindness. His chief residence being at a distance of ten miles from my own was a subject of regret, because it precluded much personal intercourse. This circumstance would have grieved me more, but for the entire confidence I had in his integrity and discretion; since it cannot be other than a great misfortune for young men, whose habits are less firmly fixed than those of our friend, to be stationed so far from their fathers in the ministry. Mr. Lavers was one who might safely be trusted at any distance or in any company: for he had no frivolity to correct, no trifling spirit that required control: he lived as in the presence of God, and in every company all might discern that he studied only those things which tend to edification. Although distance too frequently separated us, I often heard both from him and of him; but I have no recollection of the slightest whisper having been breathed to his disadvantage. He was much and deservedly beloved by all my family, and by every circle

in which he moved. His regular visits to the different stations and families was always anxiously anticipated, as well it might be, for he was a holy man: his conversation heavenly and instructive; instant in prayer and ready for every good work. Very many in the Maidstone circuit will have reason, throughout eternity, to bless the great Head of the Church that ever they were privileged to see his face.

“I am firmly of opinion that incessant attention to his dear friend and Superintendent, Mr. Bryant, during his long and severe illness, secretly undermined that fine and healthy constitution which Mr. Lavers brought with him to Maidstone; but he would cheerfully have laid down his life to have served my honoured predecessor. The journeys which he undertook, with the labours he performed for him, the nightly watchings by his couch, and the poignant sorrow occasioned by his dissolution, were, I believe, the forerunners of our dear brother's decline, and of his premature removal to a brighter world. Lamentations for him we have none; he is too high in bliss for us to deplore his departure; but a mourning widow and numerous Christian friends weeping for themselves and for their children, cannot efface his beloved image from their remembrance; nor can I, whilst writing, refrain the tributary tear for one I loved so dearly. He was, indeed, a pattern of Christian virtues, worthy of being held up for imitation to young Ministers, and one whom aged servants of the Most High might justly have desired as a co-worker with them in the Gospel vineyard. His praise is, and long will be, in the churches, although he was too little known among them; but the Lord removed him at his own time, which was the best. He is not accountable to us for his mysterious dealings; our duty is to be silent, and patiently to wait the period when the darkness which now envelopes his throne shall be removed, and the light of eternal day unfold the

vast scheme of his providence towards the children of men.

“Much more might be said of our departed brother, but these reminiscences may serve as a free-will offering to his memory and worth, and I shall rejoice should they afford some gleam of consolation to his dear bereaved partner, and the large circle of friends, who now deplore their loss in proportion as they prized his love and friendship.”

CHAPTER III.

Extracts from Mr. Lavers's Journal and Correspondence whilst in the Maidstone Circuit.

THE analogy subsisting between the kingdoms of nature and of grace is peculiarly manifested in the growth of the youthful disciple. As the blossom of spring ripens into the fruit of summer, and as a young tree throws out its foliage and fruit earlier than one of maturer age, so did the subject of this memoir early assume

“A youthful vigour and autumnal green;”

and being “planted” betimes “in the house of the Lord, flourished in the courts of our God.” After a short season of legal bondage, with little alternation of doubts and fears, he found permanent rest in Jesus; and in the triumph of faith and unreserved consecration, he obtained a stability in the divine life which few realize without a more severe and protracted warfare.

This phenomenon might safely be resolved into God’s good pleasure: still some subordinate causes may be adduced, which, whilst they partially account for it, may afford an instructive lesson. The Saviour’s call to great sacrifices or painful duties, is often accompanied with a large portion of spiritual joy to sweeten the bitter cup, and render light the cross: hence suffering saints have grown familiar with the petition,—

“When my sorrows most increase,
Let thy strongest joys be given;
Jesus, come with my distress,
And agony is heaven!”

Let us now turn to the character of the subject: he was crucified to the world and to the pleasure of sense; he took heed to himself, and to his doctrine. It was his delight to do the will of God, and by reducing the doctrine into practice, he knew its efficacy and experienced its blessedness. Like the bee which culls food from every flower, he sought from books, and providences, and character, to add to his store of spiritual knowledge; and his harvest will be rich who "sows beside all waters." His path was that of the just; and it was in reflecting the shining light, in proportion as he received it, that he shone "more and more unto the perfect day."

If the majority of young converts, in the ardour of their first love, before zeal has been tempered by prudence, have been emulous of the ministerial work, it will be far from matter of surprise that a young Minister, of whose course the preceding lines present a transcript, should pant to convey the blessings of the Gospel to distant lands. Mr. Lavers felt the force of that heart-stirring sentiment, "A world in *misery* is a *moving* spectacle, but a world in *rebellion* is an *appalling* one." Hence, in the second year of his appointment to Maidstone, moved with heavenly compassion for the miseries of the heathen world, he offered himself to the Missionary Committee, to labour in any department of the foreign field. To this he thus refers in a letter to his cousin, Mr. Roberts:—

"The great question is, not where we live, nor how long, but *how well*! I trust I may be permitted to see you again before I cross the seas, but 'the will of the Lord be done.' When I consider all the way in which the Lord my God has led me, it raises me very high and sinks me very low; high in filial confidence, and low in humble adoring gratitude. In reviewing the various and previously untried duties in which the Lord has supported me since we parted, I cannot but acknow-

ledge, 'He doth all things well.' Even now he enables me 'to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks.' This is indeed a high privilege. Polemics may write and say what they will, blessed be God, I feel the kingdom fixed within, which is 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' God must be glorified in all our thoughts, and words, and actions. When Jesus comes in the power of his Spirit, and takes up his abode in the heart, he makes 'all things new.' In this state of mind and experience, far from dishonouring his priestly office, as some affirm, believers peculiarly honour and exalt it. Let it be our study, as fellow-labourers, constantly to set forth Immanuel as a Saviour for all men, a Saviour from all sin, and a Saviour now."

It was about this time that Mr. Lavers took an active part in the formation of a Loan Tract Society. In this benevolent work he was in the habit of visiting more than one hundred houses every fortnight, when he embraced the opportunity of exhorting the inmates to flee from the wrath to come. It may be safely inferred that these harbingers of peace and salvation found their way, through the power of the Spirit, into the hearts of many who received them into their dwellings, being virtually that "bread *corn* cast upon the waters, which shall be found after many days."

In the summer of 1826, he notices, with deep emotion, the setting of a bright luminary in Zion, by the removal of the Rev. Mr. Saffery, Pastor of the Baptist church of Salisbury, to the church triumphant. Of the character and ministry of that faithful servant of Christ, he expresses himself with grateful delight. It appears that Mr. Saffery occasionally preached at Maidstone; at one of which services Mr. Lavers was present, whose estimate of the Preacher's spirit and discourse may be gathered from the remark it elicited, "That it was

heaven on earth to hear him." This is followed by a gratulation that his kindred spirit had gained the heavenly mansions where his best affections had long centered, and he closes with an earnest prayer that his last end might resemble that of his departed brother.

Mr. Lavers was still a candidate for that noblest of enterprises, the Missionary work, and his ardour for it continued unabated; but the rapidly declining state of his mother's health, who had from the first expressed a strong and unalterable objection to his leaving his native land, induced him to decide on continuing in the itinerancy at home. Although filial affection prompted this decision, it was doubtless strengthened, and the path of duty made more plain, by the prospect of a large sphere of usefulness opening before him in a home circuit. On this subject he thus expresses himself to a member of the family, early in the month of August:—

"I am no stranger to my dear mother's views and feelings on this important subject. I have therefore, after mature consideration, made up my mind not to go abroad whilst she is spared to us. I shall thus be prevented from adding one pang to her affliction. Were I fully convinced of that *special* call to labour in a heathen land which would justify my waving every other consideration or summons to duty, that path, however painful, must have been pursued. As I cannot affirm this to be the case, let me entreat your prayers that the great Head of the Church will bless me with the outpouring of his Spirit, and make me a blessing in my own country."

The extracts which follow are selected from a Diary, which appears to have been discontinued from the time Mr. Lavers left Maidstone to enter on the Dover circuit. To some it may be a matter of regret that it does not comprise more minute and successive notices, which

would have thrown considerable light on his character and labours, as well as on the dealings of a gracious Providence during the chequered scene of his earthly pilgrimage.

DIARY.

*"Thou hast been my helper; leave me not, neither forsake me,
O God of my salvation."*

HAVING ministered in the Gospel for five months at Ashburton, Devon., I was appointed to the Maidstone circuit, March 31st, 1824.

1842, October 27th.—I rose this morning under a deep sense of my vileness, and of shame on account of my sloth and instability; but humbling myself at the mercy-seat, I yet enjoyed fellowship with the Father and the Son in prayer. Bless the Lord, O my soul! the more unworthy the object, the greater is the benefit bestowed. Lord, keep me watchful and prayerful, and may I never sin that grace may abound. I now look up to thee, and know it shall not be in vain.

28th.—O my God, there is none in heaven or earth that I desire but thee! When shall I be rooted and grounded in thee? I bring my poor heart just as it is, and entreat thee to take full possession of it, knowing that one gracious powerful word of thine can make it clean. Lord, I feel that without this washing I have no part with thee. I confess my sin before thee. O save me from hypocrisy! Let my whole walk manifest my sincerity; and help me from this time, whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, to do all to thy glory: "giving none offence to any, but pleasing all men in all things for their profit, that they may be saved." This will be the effect of drinking of Christ the smitten rock. (1 Cor. x. 4.)

30th.—Another month is nearly closed : thus we are bringing our years to an end, as a tale that is told. O Lord, teach me “so to number my days as to apply my heart to wisdom.” Let not this be added to former days and years of folly. Whilst I bless the Lord for deliverance from outward and known sin, I deeply feel my need of perfect sanctity; and that the more, since I have at times experienced such complete deliverance from all known sin that my heart has not condemned me. O God, bring in thy great salvation, and strengthen my faith to receive it. Thou art very near, and in thee “all fulness dwells.”

Nov. 1st.—Yesterday was the Sabbath. Well may it be called, “holy to the Lord and honourable.” He made it manifest that he has not finally forsaken this little hill of Zion. May thy goodness, O Lord, be deeply engraven on my heart. O take it, and make it soft, and make it new : now stamp it with all thy image. I grieve on account of my inadvertency ; it appears to arise not so much from an absence of the *power* of recollection, as that I do not properly use it. I thank God for the seasonable advice of Christian friends. I was greatly blessed through the conversation of Mrs. Mole, of Tenterden : she spoke powerfully to me concerning the great salvation : it was indeed a word in season ; may I never, never forget it. Since that time the Lord has been sensibly deepening his work in my soul.

It is now seven months since I left Ashburton for this station ; the Lord only knows what I then felt. After I had been here but a little time I suffered loss : the noise, bustle, and show of this place imperceptibly influenced my mind ; but Jesus, in much mercy, has overruled it for good, showing me more clearly the deceitfulness of the world, and what was in my own heart ; but, adored be his name, he has restored it. I now sit at his feet, and drink at the open fountain. Here will I live and die. Lord, increase my faith. Through it

may I obtain and then hold fast the gift of perfect love. Whilst I write, I feel he pours into my soul a richer measure of his grace.

To-day I have much to do; several of the flock to visit, besides preaching, &c. O Lord, go with me: be to me mouth and wisdom, and be with the dear people; give them ears to hear, and stir them up "to lay hold on thee."

2d.—Last night I found great enlargement in preaching. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." May I pray much more for the aid of the Holy Spirit, and when conscious of his presence and power, may I be preserved from boasting "as though I had not received them." Yesterday I had a severe trial. I plainly see how holily and unblameably I must walk, since carnal professors will exaggerate my infirmities as well as question my motives. Gracious Saviour, grant me all thy mind: bless me with a recollected and a discerning spirit, that I may never disparage my high calling or dishonour thee: especially deliver me from the spirit of pride.

3d.—I have just had tidings of one soul powerfully awakened last Lord's day. Whilst I was speaking of "the refuge of lies," the Lord applied the word. To him be all the glory. There are very many in the hiding-places of deceit. Lord, speak to all their hearts. A door is opened here, but I expect adversaries. Lo! thou art with me, but let me find thee nearer still. I thank thee for the good which already appears; but, Lord, make bare thine arm, and work mightily, for thy name's sake.

4th.—I was engaged to-day in preparing for the pulpit. I bless God this becomes much less difficult than formerly. May I be kept humble; for "God resisteth the proud." O leave me not to myself, even for a moment.

5th.—This is my regular fast-day. It is right to humble myself under thy mighty hand, and to intercede

with thee, my God, as one burdened with the sins and calamities of others. Let it be such a fast as thou, Lord, wilt approve, and whilst I pour out my complaint before thee, show me a token for good. This evening is our Missionary prayer-meeting. God of the heathen, be thou present, and let thy Spirit be abundantly poured out.

Show me all thy mind relative to the important duty of preaching the Gospel to the heathen myself. Lord, suffer me not to miss my providential way. "Thy secret is with the righteous." Delightful truth! Henceforth I will acknowledge thee in all my ways, being assured thou wilt direct my paths. My soul is kept in perfect peace. I was comforted and encouraged whilst reading in our Magazine, for this month, of one who had been brought through great temporal difficulties. O my God, look upon me; thou knowest how much I have been wronged, and what I have suffered; but thou doest all things well, and thou wilt surely make all things work together for my good. May I never suffer as an evil-doer, but for righteousness' sake: then all will be well.

7th.—O Lord, if thou hast counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, let me have fruit this day which shall abound to thy praise. "Direct my work, inspire my thought." May the Great Master of assemblies be present, and the shout of a King be heard in our camp. May I be in the Spirit. Lord, enter, fill, and possess my soul, both now and for ever.

Sunday night.—This day has been a high day. I experienced peace and liberty. There are many poor wanderers in the congregation: may they be brought into the Gospel fold.

In the evening I addressed the young from Jer. iii. 4: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth." O Lord, let thy truth savingly affect their minds, and powerfully impress them with the necessity and privilege of giving their hearts to thee.

Nov. 8th.—I was betrayed into levity, but the Holy Spirit gave almost instant reproof. O for a tender conscience that will not suffer me to grieve thee, even for a moment; then will the peace of God rule within me and the Comforter be ever present. I am not always regular as to time: I find I miss my way by being in too great haste.

9th.—My spirits are oppressed from great bodily fatigue, and I am under mixed emotions of grief and hope. Thou dost not leave me altogether comfortless, but help me to watch and pray, and save me from the sin which most easily besets me. Strengthen me to endure temptation, and “when I am tried, may I come forth like gold.”

11th.—Eternal Spirit! make my conscience very tender, and keep me from falling, for the enemy thrusts sore at me. Preserve me from all vanity of mind; strengthen me that I may make full proof of my ministry, serve thee in the church and in the world, and constantly render thee all the glory.

12th.—O Lord, I will bless thee! Thou art restoring my soul. I feel thou art a jealous God that wilt not give thy glory to another, and that hatest the thing that is evil. O God, thou art my Father, and I am thy child: “lift up upon me the light of thy countenance, and I shall be whole.”

13th.—O Lord, work powerfully upon my heart. I feel this moment that I am fully thine: thou art preparing me for, and thou wilt grant me thy salvation. O preserve me from useless as well as light conversation; let no unprofitable word proceed out of my mouth.

Monday, 15th.—Yesterday was a profitable day; I found it very good when engaged at Maidstone in the evening. The people both at the Wells and at Tunbridge are exceedingly kind; this calls for gratitude to God. May every measure of favour in their eyes be employed for their good and to God's glory.

16th.—I was hospitably entertained at Mr. H.'s. Both he and Mrs. H. are Israelites indeed: it was a refreshing season.

17th.—I spent part of this day also at Mr. H.'s: a few friends of his were present, but I fear little if any good was done. I have need to record that I have lost a day.

18th.—I was earnestly engaged in endeavouring to benefit the flock. O Lord, convert and save the young friend to whom I have just been writing: bless this humble effort to his soul's good.

Sunday, 21st.—This has been a truly blessed day. I have both seen and tasted that the Lord is gracious. Even in this place where such deep-rooted prejudice has prevailed, the people are strongly inclined to hear. We would adore thee, O God, for the day of small things, for the least tokens of success; and let me humble myself in thy sight that thou mayest employ me for thy glory. O Lord, drive out the strong man armed, and bring in thy kingdom! What cannot Omnipotence effect? Thou, Lord, hast all hearts in thine hands; turn them to thyself, and convince them that without holiness they cannot see thy face in peace.

I feel I am in danger from the kindness of friends, Lord, suffer not their kindness to make me unfaithful, especially in the momentous subject of their souls' great interests: neither suffer my zeal for holiness of heart and life to assume such a character as may alienate rather than draw them. O grant me the wisdom which is from above.

22d.—This morning I was truly happy in my God. It was when the Apostle had been caught up to the third heaven that there was given him a thorn in the flesh. Let me, at such seasons especially, stand upon my watch-tower, be instant in prayer, and let my motto be, "Looking unto Jesus!"

25th.—O Lord, thou hast been mindful of thy pro-

mises, and there shall be a fulfilment of all that thou hast spoken in the experience of those who rely upon thy faithfulness. Thou keepest thy promise for ever. O make me more faithful, zealous, and self-denying! May holiness to thee be written on all I do, and may I be an instrument here of extensive good. Preserve me from drawing back through fear where duty calls, and keep me from entering on any thing in my own strength: let the influences of thy Spirit be ever upon me, then shall I not be ashamed. Help me diligently to redeem the time, and graciously assist me in my studies, but above all in declaring thy truth.

30th.—Wherein I have transgressed, pardon me, good Lord, and for thy name and glory's sake stablish, strengthen, and settle me. Thou hast already done great things for me. Last Sabbath was a day of holy delight: in the morning service, whilst the prayers were reading, my soul was melted and quickened, and when called to speak I was favoured with much liberty both of heart and utterance. The Lord graciously prosper his own truth, keep his ministering servants steadfast in his work, cause them to rely on his promised strength, and crown their labours with great success.

Dec. 1st.—How many have been my wanderings, and how great my shortcomings during the month that is past: but “there is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared.” I am spared to see another month, that I may live nearer to the Saviour, imbibe more of his Spirit, and declare his power and willingness to save: grant, O Lord, that I may redeem the time for these important purposes. I see more of thy beauty, and pant after conformity to thy image. O when shall I awake up after thy likeness! Even now thou hearest my cries, thou comest to my relief, and art pouring thy fulness into my soul. O make it “full of goodness, full of Thee.”

2d.—I met with much this day to try my spirit:

Lord, let thy grace be sufficient for me, and cause me continually to conquer in thy strength. I was solicited to-day to attend a Missionary meeting, but felt I should, in complying, neglect home duties. I earnestly desire in all I do a single eye to the glory of God and the prosperity of Zion. I have just read of Mr. F.'s melancholy case. What havoc has sin made, and what a tyrant is Satan. "The wages of sin is death." Birth or station is no security. O that he may seek for mercy where alone it is to be found: and "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Sunday, 5th.—I have an arduous work before me, and I feel weak and helpless as a worm, having neither strength nor goodness. Holy Spirit, fill my earthen vessel with heavenly treasure. "Sanctify me wholly," and "let thy word dwell in me richly." Lord, show forth in me thy power to save, and the glory shall be thine.

7th.—My time has not been well husbanded; alas! how long shall I have to record this against myself? I enjoyed some edifying conversation with Mrs. M., and found it refreshing to my own soul to be publicly engaged this evening. I found much profit in reading Mr. T. Wood's "Mosaic History of the Creation."

9th.—Last night I felt not only greatly wearied, but dissatisfied with myself and cast down. To-day the Lord, in answer to prayer, is shining in upon me and reviving his work in my soul. O Lord, be pleased to go with me to Y——, or I must go in vain.

10th.—This has been a happy day. I had much conversation and prayer with a poor man: he appeared in earnest and much affected; the fallow-ground is broken up, and the seed is taking root. Lord, give the increase.

Sunday, 12th.—This was a joyful day to my soul: much of perfect love within and in exercise; the heart fixed upon God. I was favoured with great

light in preaching from Psalm viii. 5, "Lord what is man?" &c.

13th.—My soul has been following hard after God ; at length the sacred fire kindled and broke out in flames of love, joy, and praise. By the mercy of God, I am alive and well in the midst of danger, disease, and death. I have been thinking much of the dear friends at Blackauton and Dartmouth. May the God of Missions go with brother and sister Haddy, protect and bless them, and render them very useful among the Heathen. Bless me, even me also, O my Father, and send prosperity to this part of thy Zion.

23d.—The Lord is very near to me. I spiritually live and move in him : his will is my only law ; my sole desire is to obey and please him in all things ; but I fear myself. So often, alas ! have I detected lurking evil, or indifference in duty, that I am constrained to confess myself an unprofitable servant, and to cry out, " God be merciful to me a sinner !"

At this solemn hour of midnight the secret whisper of thy Spirit solaces me, thy mercy's beams illumine, and thy gracious all-pervading presence sweetly solemnizes my spirit. " The altogether lovely " possesses and fills my soul with transport, love, and praise. " Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. " " What wilt thou have me do ? " I almost fear sinking into the arms of sleep, lest I should fail to retain the bliss I now enjoy. Give thine angels charge over me ; stamp thy loved image indelibly on my soul ; and when I awake, may I be " still with thee. " To be filled with divine fulness is heaven below. The last Sabbath was a high day : since then I confess, with shame, I have not been so diligent as formerly. I find the heavenly kingdom can only be taken by force : may I crucify the flesh continually.

24th.—Yesterday evening Mr. B. distributed bread to the poor. I addressed them on the occasion from

John vi. 27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." O God, grant that fruit may appear to thy glory, and that sinners may gratefully accept the unspeakable gift, and with Christ possess all things. Lord, prepare me for the services of the morrow, and may many hearts be opened to welcome an incarnate God. Unless thou go with me, it will be all in vain; for "without thee I can do nothing." May the gales of thy Spirit cause the garden within to yield its spices, and entertain my Lord: my heart would now prepare thee room. Lord, fill every part; cast out every thing displeasing to thy sight; and reign and rule in me without a rival.

Christmas-Eve.—I attended Headcorn church, and found it good to draw nigh to God, especially at the table where we commemorated the Saviour's dying love. All the ordinances are precious to me, and those most so where I find most of the Saviour. To-morrow is the Sabbath. Lord, cause thy people fully to rest in thee.

27th.—How abundantly did my God bless his unworthy servant whilst drawing nigh to him, and pleading his cause with sinners. Thou hast been very nigh to me, and hast done much for me; but, alas! I have not made suitable returns for such great mercies. Worldly thoughts and unprofitable words have intruded, and grieved the heavenly visitant! Lord, pardon and restore me. I find great snares in what is termed religious company. God is my witness, I desire to view them in the most favourable light, but I am jealous over them for their sake as well as for my own, and for the sake of others. Preserve me, O Lord, from the spirit of the world, wherever it appears. I fear many go on in false security, resting in a profession connected with an outward reformation, and lose their souls. Help me also to bear an unequivocal testimony against that destructive error, Antinomianism; and may Mr. — be recovered from that snare of Satan. Lord, sanctify

and make me a vessel fit for thy service ; and, by means of thy faithful servants, work a mighty and permanent change in the hearts of the people in this neighbourhood.

30th.—Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. My times are in thy hand. I am hastening into eternity, and how much is yet to be accomplished ! Lord, work in me and by me. Adored be thy name for supporting and delivering mercies. Strengthen me to do and suffer for thee, and may I abound more and more in thy blessed service.

Jan. 25th, 1825.—Again I bow myself before thee, O God, as an unprofitable servant. My religious experience of late has not been so bright, nor have I made the same progress as formerly. Of this I had an affecting proof, having been called to preach one of the anniversary sermons at R——. I complied, but felt keenly that my soul was not adequately in the work, and intimated a desire not to be applied to on such occasions. If this proceeded from humility, and a higher estimation of others, it would be a sign of spiritual growth ; but I fear it springs from an unjustifiable diffidence, assuming the garb of humility. O Lord, forgive ; and if it be thy will that I should engage in thy service on such occasions, graciously subdue my reluctance, give me a becoming confidence, with a firm reliance on thy promised aid, and make me diligent in storing my mind with solid edifying truth. Brother and sister Haddy left Gravesend for a foreign station on the 17th. I am glad I visited and had some sweet communion with them before they sailed. Thou God of the sea, be graciously present with thy servants ; guide them in safety across the mighty waters ; protect, bless, and prosper them ; and may they find more in thee than they have relinquished from love to thee and to the souls of the perishing Heathen.

Feb. 4th.—I have been the Lord's prisoner, but "He doth all things well." I am rejoiced to be again

engaged in my loved work: may I labour with warmer zeal as well as with renewed strength.

5th.—I now taste and see that the Lord is good. I live at his feet, having nothing to bring but that which every sinner may bring,—the merits of the Redeemer. Let me also receive out of thy fulness, and praise thy name. Be with me, and strengthen me for every duty. Lord, be present at E—— M—— this evening; have mercy upon that fallen people, and graciously restore them.

6th.—I have implored of thee, O my Father and my God, that I might be made an instrument in thy hand for good; and, adored be thy name, thou hast heard and answered thy servant: still I wait to see thy great salvation. Thou hast said, “Him that honoureth me I will honour.” Lord, I desire to honour thee in all things; to make thy glory the ruling principle of all my actions, and ever to be wholly at thy disposal. “Uphold me, Saviour, or I fall!” In communion with God, my soul has been refreshed and strengthened. I can even call the great Jehovah all my own: “My Maker is my husband.”

11th.—My soul is pained and oppressed with the magnitude of the work which lies before me, and the many obstacles which prevent the free course and saving effects of the preached Gospel. Lord, be thou my shield and buckler; grant me clearer light and increasing love. Thanks be to God for the little spiritual good effected at M——. Lord, extend, deepen, and perpetuate the saving work, both there and in every part of the circuit.

Sunday, 13th.—“Truly my soul waiteth upon God;” yea more, I now rest fully in him, and rely wholly upon his power and faithfulness. Although my trials and difficulties are very great, yet the Lord is very nigh, who both helps and comforts me; and although my sins and shortcomings are more than my trials, yet the Lord

hath not cast me off, but pardons, restores, and blesses me. "Save, O save me to the end;" and work this day by all thy faithful servants, and by me also, for thy glory.

19th.—My soul is happier in the Lord than it has been for some time past; the great Redeemer is more glorious in my eyes, and his truth dearer to my heart than ever. O how inconceivably great is the loving-kindness of Israel's God! I love him because he first loved me. He condescends to counsel me by his word and Spirit, makes my heart tender, and whispers, "Fear not, for I am thy salvation;" and he has promised to "direct my work in righteousness." I am now richly favoured with his indwelling presence. How strange it is that I should ever leave him, for he is my portion, and my all: but still more strange that he should so patiently bear with, and so mercifully restore me. I hate sin; Lord, preserve me from it. To-morrow will be the Sabbath, when in the discharge of my important duties I shall have to combat the two great demons, Antinomianism and infidelity. Lord, enable me to wield the sword of the Spirit. "Let thy word dwell in me richly." Great Head of the Church, put the rod of thy strength in my hand, and work by a poor weak mortal. May the kingdom of darkness be diminished, and thy kingdom greatly increased.

Sunday, 20th.—Blessed be his name, "my heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." My dependence is wholly upon God as revealed in Christ Jesus, "reconciling the world unto himself." "All my fresh springs are in thee." I now feel and prove thy perfect love. Yes, Lord, thou art,—

"The sphere where all my passions rove,
The centre of my soul."

Now thy love engrosses all my powers, but I am afraid of self, having so often proved faithless. O for grace

never to grieve thee more ! May I keep my heart with all diligence, and do thou keep me "by thy mighty power, through faith unto salvation." O Lord, stand by me this day !

23d.—I perceive and feel more deeply that to be a lukewarm Christian is hateful in the sight of God ; and to be satisfied with a mediocrity in spiritual attainments, whilst eminence is enjoined, is highly criminal. My Joshua is leading me into the land of promise. Still I find that the graces which characterize a true believer can never be retained unless they are cultivated.

In spiritual things I aim at eminence and earnestness ; knowing that humility can never descend too low, nor love soar too high. Repentance should be extreme in its sorrow, and zeal in its ardency. On the approaching Sabbath we hold a love-feast. Blessed Spirit, shed thy light and love abroad in our hearts, and enable thy people to witness a good confession.

In the course of reading I was arrested by the following remark :—"To doubt of the immortality of the soul is an indubitable proof of its immortality ; since that doubt can only take place in a spiritual nature." O Lord, strengthen my understanding, and may I grow daily in heavenly wisdom.

April 16th.—I am as one just awakened out of sleep. Although by many I may be accounted diligent, what have I done for God these seven weeks past ? Whilst reading the following words of that eminently holy man, John Fletcher, my soul melted within me. After referring to the struggles of the late Mr. Thomas Walsh with the great enemy just before he died, and his consequent distress, Mr. Fletcher exclaims, "O, where shall I appear, who am such an unprofitable servant ? Would to God that my eyes were a fountain of tears, that I might weep for my sins : would to God I might pass the rest of my days in crying, 'Lord, have mercy upon me.' Surely then I am all unrighteousness !" I am

ashamed to write that on several occasions I have felt the rising of pride, that hateful sin. Let it stand here to witness against me, but let my contrition and forgiveness be recorded likewise, since I am ashamed and humbled as in the dust, whilst given to feel the truth of that precious scripture, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) O for confirming grace! Lord, thou art with me; never leave nor forsake me. By faith I claim thy sanctifying Spirit. I have much to learn and much to do. O Lord, bless me in my studies in divinity and in the classics. I again dedicate all I am and have, this night, to thy blessed service.

18th.—I see and feel how empty and unsatisfactory is all created good. The Lord now causes all his goodness to pass before me. Give me to prize thy love as my only portion. I have strong outgoings of soul after God and the fulness which he waits to bestow.

20th.—Another day is gone: how little have I done for God, and for my own soul's progress! Lord, give me grace and strength to be more useful here, or remove me to another station. I will, I must be thine. O for that precious faith which brings peace, and power, and love!

May 3d.—O Lord, thou knowest I am thine, wholly thine; save me then every moment: cause me ever to remember how nigh thou art to succour and to bless me. I have no resources in myself; if left to myself, I must languish and die. Grant me then a constant and full supply from the fountain-head of all blessedness: let me experience all thy saving power and all thy life of love.

6th.—To-day I found great difficulty in preserving a regular train of thought. I had some seasons, however, of profitable reflection, especially on death. O for grace to die daily; then natural death will be gain.

8th.—Yesterday I was much blessed in spirit; our love-feast was encouraging. Lord, make me unblamable in holiness in thy sight, and before this people.

11th.—I find I have been wanting in prudence, as well as in zeal. I am prone to extremes, sometimes exerting myself too much, at others languid or slothful. O my God, make me watchful, especially in company, and preserve me from levity.

14th.—The Lord has been very present with me; but I fear, whilst he has given me songs of praise, I have not honoured him as I might have done, nor listened to every motion of his Spirit. I pant after closer communion, and for the plenitude of Gospel grace. Drop down, ye heavens, from above; and may the Lord command his blessing, even life for evermore.

21st.—The longer I live, the more I feel of my own insignificance: my soul often toils in a variety of things of a distressing nature which too deeply concern me; but the Lord careth for me: my times are in his hand; and I know "He doth all things well." Some have proved unfaithful, and even cruel to me, but the Lord is my defence. When I went forth at thy command, and under thy protection, without purse or scrip, I lacked nothing. I am now unreservedly the Lord's. The angelic powers, those guardians of the faithful, are witnesses; and thine eye, O thou Searcher of hearts, is upon me. Past trials and deliverances, with past success, encourage me to go forward, and seem to cry aloud, "Be faithful unto death." Come then, eternal Spirit, and seal me to the day of redemption.

June 15th.—I have not enjoyed of late that serene spiritual state of mind which is so desirable, but to-day I have been again revived and blessed with the gracious presence of my Divine Master. Professors and half Christians, rather those we are wont to designate as such, are classes in whose society I often suffer loss. I feel an affecting consciousness that I have not been

earnestly pressing after "the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ." Lord, humble me in a review of the past, and "teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." I can no more rest without progress in my own experience than without living a life of usefulness. Lord, increase my faith and zeal, and may thy work be extended by our instrumentality.

I now resolve in the Lord's strength, first, That I will read the Bible more methodically, frequently, and diligently, with supplication for the Holy Spirit's teaching.

Secondly, To pray more constantly and earnestly for the outpouring of the Spirit upon the circuit, and for large success to the labourers of his ministering servants; that Mr. Bryant may be restored to health and usefulness; and for the conversion of my whole family at B——.

Thirdly, To apply still more closely to my studies generally, and to devote one hour every day to Latin.

Fourthly, That I will strive, by redeeming the time, by watchfulness and prayer, and by every possible means, to become what a Christian Minister should be, to do the work of an evangelist, to be made a blessing to the Connexion, and the society at large. O Lord, make me, for this end, "wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove;" give me a clear head, and a pure heart;

" A heart in every thought renew'd,
And full of love divine:
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine!"

16th.—The atmosphere of my soul is calm and serene. I am blessed with the Saviour's presence, and he applies his promises to my soul for days to come. May his loving-kindness and grace secure that obedience and consecration which he so justly claims; and may I never depart from my solemn engagements. "Iniquity

abounds, and the love of many waxes cold:" may I stand fast, and endure unto the end.

18th.—To-morrow will be the Sabbath: my soul is pressed down with a sense of my responsibility, but this is no cause of regret: I have no slavish fear, for the Lord makes me "free indeed." I have been much blessed and edified in reading Mr. Wesley's Sermons, "On Friendship with the World," "On Working out our Salvation," and "A Call to Backsliders." I want a sound understanding and a sanctified heart: without the latter I must perish eternally, and without the former I cannot be made an instrument of extensive good. May I be always on my watch-tower, looking to the Lord, and crying, "Love me, save me to the end!"

The subjoined extract from a letter, without a superscription, may be perused with profit by those who already occupy, or are about to undertake the ministerial office.

"Every candidate for the ministry should seriously consider, that whilst our flock reasonably expect from us faithful and laborious preaching, an important part of our duty lies without the circle of the pulpit; nor can that be an efficient ministry which does not unite pastoral with public instruction. Humility, simplicity, and fidelity, an aptness and delight in communicating truth, condescension to the lowest estate, with courtesy and benevolence to all, should be found united in those who devote themselves to the itinerancy. Moreover, all who would participate in the joys and triumphs of a Christian ministry, must drink of the Master's cup, and be baptized with his baptism. They take his mandate for their commission, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;' they are 'crucified with Christ,' and dead to the world. They are emphatically

‘a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men ;’ and, in their measure, they find it their very meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent them, and to finish his work. Now, if any enter this sacred field from a love of ease, or aggrandizement, or other secular motive, and are embarrassed and distressed when called to any service of peculiar solemnity here below, what must be their shame and confusion when, as slothful and wicked servants, they shall stand speechless before the bar of God ? ”

A few of Mr. Lavers’s letters to his parents, selected from a large number, will evince his anxious solicitude for their salvation. Filial affection, simplicity, and fidelity will be found to characterize this part of his correspondence. The inquiry, at the close of the first letter, how it was that he should have influence with strangers and not with those of his own house, is one which may justify a few remarks.

One impediment has been stated as originating in the difficulty of viewing those persons with the eye of faith, whom we have been accustomed to view only with the eye of sense. Efforts made by individuals for the conversion of their near relatives, often prove unsuccessful from the intimate acquaintance they possess, both of the previous course of life, and of the existing failings and infirmities of those who seek their welfare. Again, experience affords affecting proof, that men are not easily brought to listen to the voice of truth when it proceeds from the lips of those whose station or general attainments they know, or imagine, are not superior, if equal to their own. The faith of a Christian must rise in proportion to the arduous nature of his duty, and to the magnitude of his expectations. Would he then prove the favoured instrument of converting one closely allied to him by nature, more especially a *parent* ; surely his faith must be as strong and unwavering as that which

the Patriarch exercised for the promised seed. Moreover, in order to ensure success, elements of attraction must be brought to bear upon and counteract those principles which excite opposition. Hence it will be found essential to the attainment of this object that the character of the instrument be exemplary, and his conduct consistent ; the spirit humble and affectionate, with a manner conciliating and attractive. If Asher would be "blessed with children," he must be "acceptable to his brethren, and dip his foot in oil." But whilst faith and holiness are essential on the part of those who are emulous to communicate the blessing, a humble and teachable spirit is not less requisite in those to whom it is offered ; since eternal truth has declared, "Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

To his Parents.

Headcorn, May 5th, 1825.

DEAR AND HONOURED PARENTS,

I HAVE recently heard from Dartmouth, and I am thankful to learn that my beloved mother is still spared to us. Sometimes I indulge in a hope of seeing her once more ; but I am far more anxious that she may experience that transforming change which will prepare the subject of it for a joyful meeting in heaven. How would it delight my heart to hear, that not only you, my dear parents, but all my relations were living to fulfil the great end of their existence. Souls, according to their nature, must live for ever ; and if unpardoned and unsanctified here, they cannot be fit for heaven, consequently they must be for ever shut up in hell. Who can calculate the worth of the soul, when it could be redeemed at no less a price than the blood of Christ ? If I could but see my brother Richard, how would I urge this subject upon him. Ask him from me, (and

may the words pierce his heart,) "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" My health is good. I preached three times in the chapel at Maidstone, last Sunday, and once in the open air, at a distant part of the town. Every possible effort is needful, surrounded as we are by a population of more than fourteen thousand souls. How mysterious it is that I should have influence with strangers, and yet be unable to persuade my own family to come out from the world and give their hearts to God!

Believe me ever,

Your dutiful and affectionate Son,

WILLIAM.

To the Same.

Maidstone, August 15th, 1825.

It is with pleasure I inform you that I am appointed to this circuit for another year. My residence in Kent has evidently been of service to me. I have long known what it is to enjoy something of religion, but the good work of grace has greatly prospered in my soul since my appointment here. As to my situation, it is but justice to say that the dear people study to render my residence among them pleasant. Yet I find prosperity has its temptations as well as adversity, and there is no safety but in looking to Jesus. It is my study to live constantly by faith in him, to keep his glory always in view, and to walk under the conviction that I must soon appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. How I should rejoice again to see you and receive your blessing. I think the society would give me leave of absence for a fortnight, but it is right for one in my circumstances to consider the expense of so long a journey. Still I cannot but indulge in the hope of seeing you once more in this world: yet in this, as in all things, I would say,

"Thy will be done." Permit me to ask, Are you seeking pardon and peace by faith in the Lord Jesus? How can I bear the thought of your departing hence before you enjoy a sense of the favour and love of God? Are you saved from sin? For, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The fifty-first Psalm contains an excellent prayer: let me entreat you to make it your own. I pray for you daily, my ever dear parents, that you may possess this inward religion. I trust my dear father is so far reconciled to the Methodists as to attend the chapel; if he is, I shall praise God for it.

To the Same.

Headcorn, January 23d, 1826.

O MY father, my mother, are you prepared to die? Are you ready to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? Let me entreat you to meet me there with joy. I hope your views of religion are different now from what they were when I was at Ashburton. You must be brought to feel the necessity of the new birth, for "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Isai. lxiv. 6.) Now, my dear parents, who can think of standing in such a state before a just and holy God? He that has once broken the law of the land is a criminal, and when apprehended, must expect punishment, according to the tenour of the law. So it is with all who have broken the law of God; "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (See James ii. 10.) Therefore, our past sins, whether great or small, many or few, and all omissions of duty, whether towards God, our neighbour, or ourselves, must be repented of and pardoned through faith in the blood of Jesus; or we must suffer the penalty, which is endless misery. Besides, our hearts, which are naturally "deceitful, and des-

perately wicked," must be renewed, made holy, and influenced by love to God, and love to man. This is what St. Peter calls becoming "*new creatures*," and what is implied in those words of our blessed Lord, "Verily I say unto you, Ye must be born again." We should never be satisfied till we know that our sins are forgiven, since "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." But we cannot be blessed without knowing it; and all who know it, are constrained by the love of Christ to obey him: they study to please, and desire to be with him. My dear parents, be not deceived: you must feel this change in your hearts, or you cannot go to heaven. Let me persuade you to get some religious person to converse with you; and I trust my dear father will renounce his prejudices, and attend the chapel. I believe it is the will of God that I should make this request to him. I do it with all respect and tenderness, and only for the good of his soul. Blessed be the Lord, he still keeps me from growing weary in his service, and I never felt more happy than at present. O that all my dear relations were brought to seek their happiness in God.

The following letter was addressed by Mr. Lavers to a young man, at that time a prisoner in Maidstone jail:—

Headcorn, April 27th, 1826.

MY DEAR A——.

I TRUST you will not call in question my sincerity, when I cordially assure you that your sad condition has occasioned me much pain and grief, and awakened my tenderest sympathy. Hence you may ascertain the motives which, after much deliberation and prayer, have induced me to address you. But I think it due both to you and myself, to state the reason for this apology. From the reserve you often manifested in our

conversation upon spiritual subjects, I feared you might consider a communication from me in the light of an intrusion into the melancholy circumstances which have not only driven you from the privileges of society to a gloomy cell, but, what is far worse, involved your once fair character in disgrace. Far, far from my soul be such conduct: if there were no hope of alleviating, it were sin to aggravate your suffering, since I trust I have learned

“That sorrow is a sacred thing.”

So favourable was the opinion I had previously formed of you, from all that I have seen and heard, that I could not be brought to believe the fact of your commitment, until compelled to do so from a sight of the indictment. Your serious deportment and apparently devoted attention to the public ordinances, first arrested my attention, and led me to feel an interest in your welfare. Since that period, one which I fondly hoped would have decided your character in favour of truth and holiness, I have felt very anxious that you might experience the power of true religion; nor is it possible that my concern for you should be diminished at this solemn juncture. I am possessed neither of worldly riches nor of influence, or they should be readily exerted in your behalf, as far as legitimate: not that these things are desirable in themselves; they have been aptly described by the poet,—

“A broken reed at best, and oft a spear,
On whose sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.”

I have to lament the little love I have to God and man. Still rejoiced should I be were I instrumental in leading you to the true source of peace and consolation. The first step towards it is, that we humbly and penitentially confess our manifold sins of heart and life at the footstool of divine mercy, crying out, with the

Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

I am informed that you still assert your innocence of the crime for which you have been condemned. Now, my dear, dear A., whilst I deeply lament your condition, and commiserate your sufferings, which must be most poignant, I dare not cast a veil over transgression, nor must sympathy with the sufferer induce me to speak or think lightly of "that abominable thing which God hateth."

Allow me to remind you, that you are sufficiently acquainted with the Scriptures to know that a denial of the fact, if you are indeed the culprit, adds greatly to your guilt in the sight of that omniscient Being who spieth out all our ways, and who declares, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." The law is just and holy, and it is required of the sinner that he honour this righteous law, by making an ingenuous and humble confession of every known violation of his duty, whether against God or against his fellow-creatures. Rest not, I entreat you, in a false security. Let the affecting sense of the emptiness and uncertainty of all sublunary good, which your present condition inculcates, prove as wings to carry you a humble suppliant to the throne of mercy; remembering that "the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart he will not despise." Surrender your whole soul into the hand of God, to be saved solely through the merits of his dear Son; and, in the very act and exercise of humble, self-renouncing faith, you shall experience the forgiveness of your sins, that God is become your salvation, and sing from the heart,—

"God is love, I know, I feel,
Jesus weeps, and loves me still."

To the redeemed of the Lord, to those who love the

Saviour, a prison may become a palace, and a dungeon the portal of heaven. Pray earnestly to the Lord for the Holy Spirit to show you your lost condition, and lead you to "the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness." Give no sleep to your eyes till you have found peace with God through faith in the only Mediator; and when you feel that he has laid aside all his wrath, and given peace to your soul, I am confident, if you have injured any one, you will study, as far as in your power, to make restitution.

O how I long to do you good, by leading you to obtain peace and happiness in the religion of Jesus! When you were in the world, its deceitful smiles and gilded pleasures captivated your soul. To be a man of fashion appeared a great thing in your eyes, and you counted the votaries of dissipation happy: no wonder you saw no beauty in the Saviour, and no glory in his cross. Now, solemn as is your situation, the false glare of this world's vanities no longer dazzles, its intoxicating pleasures no more seduce you: look up, then, my afflicted brother, and venture to hope in God. Distrust and despair are no virtues; be a prisoner of hope, in spite of bolts and bars. When Christ comes to give spiritual liberty to the captive, they cannot keep him out. Now let the Son of God make you free, and you shall be "free indeed." Only believe the truth of the Gospel, and the good Samaritan will pour wine and oil into your wounds, bind up the broken heart, and your bitter cup of sorrow shall be sweetened with milk and honey from the rock, Christ. Seek fervently that renewing of the Holy Spirit which will enable you to hail the gloomy prison as the scene of your new birth; let the Angel of the Covenant hover over your cheerless couch, expel the demons of unbelief, pride, and revenge; turn your captivity, and gird you about with gladness. Here I would conclude, but my heart is full: let me entreat you to examine yourself, and to deal faithfully with your own soul. O,

consider, that were God extreme to mark what we have done amiss, you and I, and every child of man, must have been cast into the prison of hell, till we had paid the very last farthing ; that is, for ever !

“ To pant, and toss, and groan beneath the load,
And bear the wrath of an Almighty God.”

It is, indeed, “ a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” But let us reverse the picture, “ There is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared.” “ He is long-suffering, and of great kindness, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Then I shall anticipate meeting my dear unfortunate A. in those bright regions where the noon of night shall be exchanged for the noon of day.

Farewell, and believe me,

Ever faithfully yours,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Lavers is appointed to the Dover Circuit.—His diversified labours, with some instances of success.—A Minister's sick chamber.—Narrative of a Backslider restored.—Interview with a young Scotsman.—Tribute to the memory of an old disciple.

THE inspired writers make little mention of Kings, heroes, or sages of antiquity, unless as connecting links in the chain of prophecy, and as manifesting the wisdom and power of Jehovah, in the defence or enlargement of his church. On the contrary, they direct our attention to those who have been trampled upon by the great and noble of this world, and defamed or scorned by the proficients in earthly science. Hence, they afford us minute notices of the life of one who passed twenty years of banishment in the land of Syria; they present us with the history of a youth who was sold by his brethren, and carried captive into Egypt; and they record the case of a malefactor who, for flagrant offences, suffered upon a cross. In all this "wisdom is justified of her children;" for the two former were heirs of promise, whose names are honoured with a place in the annals of the faithful; (Heb. xi. 21, 22;) and the dying thief, in whose short history we have the most encouraging proof of Christ's ability and willingness to save, exhibits the brightest trophy of the triumphs of the cross. Thus, from age to age, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in

his presence ;” and “ that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us.”

Impressed with such considerations, we shall be prepared to follow the subject of this memoir through the later scenes of his labours, without regretting the absence of events characteristic of human greatness ; and be led habitually to observe, and duly to appreciate, every instrument which the Lord condescends to own and prosper.

Mr. Lavers was appointed, by the Conference of 1826, to the Dover circuit, under the superintendence of the Rev. P. Jameson, who was justly esteemed by his colleague and by the society as a sound and judicious Preacher, a wise counsellor, and a faithful friend.

Dover is an extensive circuit, comprising Folkestone, Sandgate, Hythe, (where Mr. Lavers for a season resided,) with Dymchurch, on the coast, besides several stations in the towns and villages of the interior. Many parts of this circuit, in addition to the sublime scenery, salubrity of atmosphere, and fertility of soil, which characterize and distinguish the county of Kent, have for a long season enjoyed the far greater blessings of Gospel light and Gospel ordinances. Dover and Sandgate have, from time to time, been favoured with evangelical Ministers in their churches, whilst Methodism has taken deep root in the former, even from the days of its venerable Founder. About the year 1758-9, the Rev. Charles Wesley, by planting the Gospel there, amidst much persecution, brought to her inhabitants a surer defence than her strongest fortifications, and more precious riches than those wafted thither by the ocean which washes her shores. Mr. Wesley opened the first, usually called the Pier Chapel, in that town, September 17th, 1759 ; and a second chaste and commodious place of worship has subsequently been erected in the suburbs.

On the arrival of the Ministers appointed to this circuit, there were found, notwithstanding the lukewarm

and chilling moral atmosphere around them, some elevated lights, holding fast those doctrines and that discipline which, under the sanction of the Most High, has rendered Methodism an incalculable blessing to millions, both in our own country and in foreign lands.

An extract from Mr. Lavers's papers will bring us acquainted with the views and feelings with which he entered upon this new field of labour :—

“ ‘ Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.’ To me, thy unworthy servant, thou hast been very gracious, delivering me from all my fears, and imparting to me strength according to my day. Under thy gracious protection I have been conducted here in peace and safety. I am blessed with a tender conscience, dreading nothing so much as the very idea of sinning against the God I love, and I am enabled to manifest greater decision of character than I formerly did. Earnestly do I implore the gift of the Holy Spirit, in all his sacred influences, to lead me to cleave to Christ and his Gospel with full purpose of heart ; to rest exclusively upon him, who is the rock of my salvation ; and to glorify him with my body and my spirit, which are his.

“ I bind myself anew to thy service, most gracious Lord, deeply deploring every departure from thee ; and I entreat thee abundantly to bless the labours of thy ministering servants in this part of thy vineyard. O ! the amazing riches of that grace which has kept me hitherto, and which is engaged on behalf of all who diligently seek it, to save them unto the end.”

A plain statement of the duties of Wesleyan Ministers, even on the least laborious circuits, performed in the spirit of the work, would go far to justify the eulogium of Dr. Chalmers, that “ Methodism is Christianity in earnest.” It is true, that in the metropolis, and in large towns, by partially availing themselves of an extensive lay agency, they are not always engaged six nights of

the week in preaching, although the exception of more than one week-night falls to the lot of comparatively few. Still, the quarterly visitation of the numerous classes, attending the Leaders' meetings, visiting the members, with more frequent calls to auxiliary societies and public institutions, equally engage all their time and strength. In this circuit the duty was arduous; the stations being wide from each other, some of the roads being almost impassable in the winter, and others so exposed to a bleak air, especially at night, as to endanger the strongest constitution: this may be inferred from the fact that carriages have sometimes been overturned by the violence of the wind. The health of several of the Local Preachers has materially suffered from these journeys, although their services have been required only on the Sabbath. Here, as in most of the circuits into which the itinerant field is divided, the Ministers bear, in equal proportions, the burden and heat of the day, alternately visiting the country stations. Although these servants of Christ may be said to live on the milk and honey of Canaan, when contrasted with the occasional grassy bed and homely diet of their venerable Founder, or the scanty fare and book-board pillow of his hardy comrade, John Nelson; still, stated departures and long absence from home, especially from families often requiring their help and solace; the constant changes of bed and of board; exposure to all seasons and to all weathers; "besides that which cometh upon them daily, the care of all the churches,"* manifest that such men must soon resign their posts, unless they have learned, in the full meaning of the expression, to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Lavers entered upon his work with the same

* "Solicitude for the state of all the churches," more adequately expresses the meaning of the text.

zeal and vigour, which had from the first characterized his labours, but with the advantages of more extensive scriptural knowledge, and clearer discernment of character. In pursuing them, he manifested an ardour which difficulties could not damp, and an affection that unkindness could not weary, for his was the love that "endureth all things." His attachment to the doctrines and principles of Methodism was not only warm, but, in a proper sense, enthusiastic; and his adherence to them uniform and abiding. He was influenced by an ardent desire to win souls to Christ; and at the same time he was most sedulous in his efforts to build up believers, feeding the flock of God with knowledge and understanding. Hence he was assiduous in that good old custom of meeting and exhorting the members of society on every station, and in animating them to exhort and admonish one another. He well knew, that as the barometer indicates the state of the atmospheric air, with which is connected the health of all who inhale it, so the spiritual atmosphere of a Christian society will materially depend upon the performance or the omission of this important part of the ministerial office. The Rev. John Wesley's instructions to helpers, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, were fairly transcribed in the labours of this devoted servant of the church; since it may be affirmed, on the authority of many witnesses, that he was "in labours more abundant;" that in whatever society his lot was cast, he was constantly preaching; and that from the well of water springing up within his soul, he appeared to live only that he might communicate to all around, the overflowings of the Christian graces. The most prominent features of his public ministrations were the intense earnestness and affectionate solicitude with which he strove to impress on the hearts of his hearers the importance of his message, and their personal interest in it. He wove the golden chain of truth with the silken

cord of love to reach the heart of the sinner, so that, if proof against the earthquake and the storm, he might listen and respond to the still small voice. Both his language and manner were the genuine expressions of a vigorous and ardent mind, deeply affected with its subject. To borrow an expression of Archbishop Leighton, "He conveyed every message manifestly written upon his own heart." Mr. Lavers highly prized and diligently searched the sacred volume, which he took as the substance of all his labours. Such was his estimation of it, that those who knew him the most intimately have affirmed, that he seldom wrote a letter without that text-book by his side, or dispatched one, without previously commending it on his knees to the blessing of God. It was the summit of his ambition to comprehend with accuracy, to interpret with fidelity, and to apply with power and energy, the saving truths of the Gospel. He was convinced that the authority of God over the consciences of his intelligent creatures is chiefly through the medium of his holy word, faithfully applied to the heart; that word which the Almighty has declared "shall not return to him void," and with the proclamation of which he has associated the communication of the Spirit. It was from a vivid impression of this truth that many of his discourses were formed on the *expository* plan. He felt the force of a remark of Erneste, "Experience, the consent of all ages, and the very nature of the thing, show that the *exposition of the sacred volume* is the highest and most difficult part of the teacher's functions; since all sacred knowledge, as well as the defence of the divine truth, must be drawn from the right understanding and accurate interpretation of the sacred writings. Moreover, with the labour of interpreting the holy Scriptures, the purity of the Christian religion has been either lost or restored."

The estimate in which Mr. Lavers's ministerial character and labours were held at this period, will be

unfolded in the following extracts from letters addressed to the editor.

This first is from the pen of the Rev. J. Cheesman, of Chelmsford :—

I AM truly glad to hear that you are endeavouring to perpetuate the memory of my late excellent friend, Mr. Lavers. Many will rejoice in possessing such a reminiscence of so devoted a man; and should the accompanying remarks in any measure facilitate that object, I shall have my reward.

Our late highly esteemed brother was a faithful and zealous Minister of the Gospel of Christ. In his efforts to save the souls of his fellow-men, he was ardent and indefatigable. The peculiar earnestness and affection with which he besought sinners to be reconciled to God, and encouraged and urged believers to go on unto perfection, clearly evinced his zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and for the welfare of immortal souls. The term salvation, as announced by him, was not an indefinite one, but full of important meaning. He held it forth as consisting in our restoration from the ruins of the fall; a recovery of the image as well as the favour of God; in the overthrow and demolition of Satan's empire over the human heart; the annihilation of self in all its modifications, and the establishing, in its stead, of that kingdom within, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" "the bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Mr. Lavers had most exalted views of the blessings of the Gospel when received in their fulness, and much he lamented that the generality of Christians lived so far beneath what it was both their duty to press after, and their privilege to enjoy. I never knew any one who dwelt so frequently on the doctrine of entire sanctification; and judging from his letters to me, that subject appears to have formed a leading feature in his correspondence.

“Strive,” says he, in a letter which now lies before me, “by prayer, faith, and self-denial, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord: earnestly seek the mind that was in Christ: strive that the spirit of glory and of God may abidingly rest upon you. Look not, so as to be dismayed, at any impediments: to a firm unshaken faith there are no *ifs* and *peradventures*, but the promises of God are all yea and amen, and invite our unhesitating reliance.” He earnestly enforced those passages of sacred writ wherein sanctification is promised as a free gift, inculcated as an important duty, or implored as essential to our present and future felicity. He affirmed that no language could be more decisive in proof of the certainty of attaining it, than that of the precept in 1 Pet. i. 15, 16, taken in connexion with the prayer, 1 Thess. v. 23; and the connected promise “Faithful is he that *calleth* you, who also *will do it*.” Whoever, therefore, fully feels himself to be the subject of the command, and from the heart sends up the petition, confiding in the power and faithfulness of God, shall find that this thing is possible with him, and consequently shall realize the blessing. Mr. Lavers appeared constantly acting under a vivid impression of that saying of the Apostle, “It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.” Hence he did not consider his work done when he left the pulpit. During his stay at Dover, I enjoyed much communion with him, and having accompanied him in his visits both to the members of the society and to others, I have repeatedly witnessed his anxious inquiries, faithful expostulations, and earnest prayers, which in many instances were succeeded by the blessing of the Most High. He strove to convince all to whom he could gain access that there was nothing melancholy in true religion, and that the reason why it did not appear to them in its intrinsic beauty, would be found to arise from their own state of mind and character. That he

himself was devoted to God, and manifested much of the power and blessedness of the truths he taught, was apparent to all who knew him ; for he lived in the Spirit, and walked in the Spirit, and his conversation was habitually in heaven. Whether reference be made to his general character, his friendships, or his labours, he was invariably the same man. Shortly after he left Dover for Honiton, he thus writes : " I am now busy amongst souls, like a husbandman in a great harvest-field." His advice to me on that subject was, " Let the zeal of God's house eat you up." " Let us approach the throne of grace with courage, and so ask and receive, that our joy may be full." " If we live in the spirit of prayer, we shall indubitably receive gracious answers, and be enabled with boldness and confidence to urge others to that important duty. A Minister of the sanctuary going forth to the people, after close communion with God in secret, will carry a large portion of heaven with him into the assembly, and make them feel that he has a message from the Lord to them."

Our dear departed brother possessed a lively apprehension of ministerial responsibility, insomuch that the very idea of his being accessory to the delusive hopes of inconsistent or unstable professors was insupportable. I have witnessed many instances of his faithful dealing with triflers in religion. In such cases he would reprove and rebuke with all authority ; yet he would seek a proper time, and administer the reproof " in meekness of wisdom." He protested against the concealment of any portion of the truth of God, when duty bade its announcement, lest it should prove offensive " to ears polite ;" for it was his constant study so to act that he might adopt the language of the Apostle, " Wherefore I take you to record, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts xx. 26, 27.) Mr. Lavers was emphatically a labourer in the Lord's

vineyard. His zeal and devotedness were neither uncertain in their exercise nor transient in duration, but steady, fervent, uniform, and persevering. His memory is blessed. In him I have lost a valuable correspondent, a judicious counsellor, and a long tried friend. But he is now in glory : may the remembrance of his worth, deeply impressed as it is upon my heart, animate me to seek with increasing earnestness to enter into that rest.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

J. CHEESMAN.

On the same subject, an old disciple, residing at Dover, writes as follows :—

WITH our late beloved brother I enjoyed sweet Christian fellowship : he was one whom I highly esteemed, and the record of his worth is indelibly engraven on my heart. If ever a man acted entirely from pure motives, that man was Mr. Lavers. He ardently thirsted for the good of souls, his noble aim being the glory of God in the salvation of his fellow-men. I could have wished he had considered himself more, but his fervent zeal could neither be subject to restraint, nor sensible of danger. His motto was "Onward," and he has fallen, I had almost said, a martyr in the best of causes. I can truly say that I never heard him but with delight, and seldom without shedding tears. Every word he uttered came from the heart, and he appeared to throw his whole soul into his work. I think it was scarcely possible to sit and hear him unmoved. His manner was generally plain, but always forcible ; and, to a considerable measure of feeling, there was united a simplicity, and often a measure of originality, which rendered his addresses peculiarly striking. Were I writing to one who was a stranger to his many excellences, and had never witnessed his entire devotedness to the important work in which he was engaged, I might add much more, but

it is needless. He is gone before. Let his exhortations urge, his example encourage, his end invite us. May we follow him, even as he followed Christ, until we meet him

“High in salvation and the climes of bliss.”

I remain, dear Sir, very faithfully yours,

O. HAMBROOK.

Mr. Lavers entered fully into the sentiment expressed by the author of the “Natural History of Enthusiasm,” “that the life of a Minister of the Gospel is, in an important though in a subordinate sense, vicarious; that, in the assumption of the sacred office, he is pledged to the highest pitch of exertion, and to the extreme point of endurance.” It may truly be affirmed of Mr. Lavers, that he was a Bishop indeed: a faithful and wise *overseer* of the flock. He would often say, and it was the language of his heart, “Now I live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.”

Since the pen of inspiration has recorded that “he that winneth souls is wise,” the subject of these pages may confidently be held up as one eminently endued with the hidden wisdom. Numerous, and for the most part exemplary, were the seals to his ministry in the Dover circuit, whilst in whatever field he was called to labour, he cast his mantle over many who, renouncing the world and leaving the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, are now going on unto perfection. The fathers in Christ, and the mothers in Israel, of whom several were either converted or built up under his ministry, invariably expressed towards him the warmest attachment, for they could best appreciate the value of his labours and of his example. The language of the Apostle to the church at Philippi, “God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ,” is not too glowing a description of the feelings

of this servant of God towards those amongst whom he ministered. On his arrival at every station he would constantly ask the Leaders for their class-books, and immediately seek out the absentees, whilst the sick and the afflicted were the objects of his peculiar care. In this department of his work he manifested peculiar delight, and in the discharge of it he was eminently prospered. His lively interest in their temporal concerns was evinced by his sympathy, his counsel, and his prayers, and he afforded them relief according to, and even beyond, his ability. Often would he forestall his quarterly allowance to relieve the necessitous; and, at times, it has been unexpectedly elicited that he has given away his last shilling. There was a chord within which vibrated to the slightest touch of human woe: he was a Priest who, when a neighbour (a term he well understood) was in distress, never "passed by on the other side."

One incident, taken promiscuously, may serve for illustration.

Early in 1825, a young man visited Dover with the prospect of obtaining a permanent engagement. After encountering many difficulties, a relation who was settled there engaged to qualify him for business; but it was needful that temporary means of support, which his relative could not spare, should be afforded him. The case having been represented to Mr. Lavers, he advanced a considerable part of the allowance required, and by his influence and exertions raised the remainder. The plan, under Providence, proved successful; and the individual referred to, after a time, settled in business in the Isle of Thanet, where he was appointed, and still continues an acceptable Local Preacher.

Thus mindful of their temporal welfare, still he chiefly watched for their souls, as one that must give an account. He studied their characters, that he might counsel and warn them; their failings, that he might reprove; and

their graces, that he might commend and encourage them.

The following communication is from the pen of Mrs. Hogbin, an experienced Christian, at Lyminge, in the Dover circuit:—*

“ I consider myself privileged in having an opportunity of bearing my humble testimony to the power of divine grace, which I had the happiness to witness in our departed friend, Mr. Lavers. I never met with any one who appeared to enjoy more of the life of God in his own soul, or who was more anxiously concerned for the salvation of the souls of others. His word was attended with peculiar power both to the conviction of sinners and the establishment of the household of faith. I can truly say that his prayers, admonitions, and example were greatly blessed to me; and the remembrance of him, in connexion with those labours of love, still acts as a stimulus to seek that maturity of the Christian graces which he so richly exhibited. My husband unites with me in bearing the most decided testimony to his exemplary piety, and further remarks, that in devotedness to the work of the ministry, he never saw his equal.”

Not long after Mr. Lavers arrived in this circuit, intimation was given that on a certain day he would preach a sermon to the young. Amongst those assembled was a young person, who had lived regardless of her soul's salvation. The Lord carried home the word with power to her conscience: she became deeply affected by a sense of her lost condition, and her heart was opened to welcome her Saviour as the great physician. Shortly after she obtained a sense of pardon, united herself to the

* A commodious chapel has lately been erected at this place, an object which Mr. Lavers had much at heart, and which he lived to see accomplished

society, and has continued to walk consistently with her Christian profession.

About the same period, one who had sunk through a lukewarm into a backsliding state, came, with others, to hear the word of God. It was the first time he had heard this faithful ambassador of Christ, but it proved a season never to be forgotten. His affecting yet energetic appeal from John xxi. 15, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" accompanied by the power of the Spirit, sank deep into the heart of him who, like the fallen disciple, first followed afar off, and subsequently denied his Master. The same rebuke of love which beamed from the eye of the Saviour upon his disconsolate disciple, was productive of a similar effect from the lips of his servant; for the backslider melted into contrition, whilst tears of penitential sorrow flowed apace. Nor was it a transient emotion, since he never rested till he had again obtained a sense of forgiveness, and experienced the love of God once more shed abroad in his heart. The restored disciple is still going on his way rejoicing.

One evening Mr. Lavers had been preaching at Ly-minge from the parable of the prodigal son, when an extraordinary measure of heavenly influence was manifested amongst the people, insomuch that many testified the place where they were assembled to be in very deed "the house of God and the gate of heaven." The Minister on leaving the chapel watched for one who, he feared, was not then decided in religion, took him by the hand, and, bursting into tears, earnestly entreated him to give his heart to God, and to live henceforth to him alone: and there is reason to trust that this zealous and affectionate admonition was not given in vain.

On another occasion, having engaged in prayer, Mr. Lavers rose, and after a few prefatory remarks, told his hearers that his mind had been much exercised and was still undecided as to the subject on which he should

address them.* After a short pause, he turned to the parable of "the barren fig-tree," and whilst opening and applying it, such a power accompanied his words, that the greater part of the congregation were melted into tears, and all present appeared to feel, "How dreadful is this place!" Having finished his discourse, he gave out with peculiar solemnity, "Your prayers are earnestly desired for the late Mr. —— a recent backslider, for he is dead to God, and dead to us."† At the house of a friend, where the Preachers were entertained and lodged, Mr. Lavers spent a considerable portion of the night in agonizing prayer to God, for the restoration of this wandering sheep.

The ardent concern and tender sympathy for the states of the people which distinguished this faithful Pastor, may be inferred from an incident which occurred at Elham, a village adjacent to Lyminge.‡ Mr. Lavers was addressing the congregation from Psal. xlix. 8, "The redemption of their souls is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." As he proceeded, he felt so keenly for the alto-

* This was the exception, not the rule: for his subject-matter was well thought out, and "his words well ordered." He offered not to the Lord "of that which cost him nothing."

† This is true with respect to every unregenerate man. The animal indeed is alive, but the man is dead,—"*dead whilst he liveth.*"

‡ In the history of the Elham Society there are found some of the features which characterized the primitive church at Thessalonica. When the Gospel was preached at E——, it came in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. It was also received with joy, and with a measure of affliction. The parallel extends further. For many successive years glad tidings have been brought of their faith and charity. Brotherly love increased and abounded, and, like that of the Thessalonian converts, it issued forth in a stream of universal benevolence. The society at E—— has long been a nursery for Ministers, so much so, that in the circuit it has been designated as "*the school of the Prophets.*" Many of these are now occupied in different spheres at home, and some across the Atlantic, "*sounding out the word of the Lord.*"

gether worldly, and for the mere carnal professors, who were alike trifling with their souls' eternal welfare, that he was compelled to sit down and give vent to his emotions. With a view to relieve him, a member of society got up, and gave out a verse of the hymn beginning,

“ Eternal Power, whose high abode
Becomes the grandeur of a God.”

When Mr. Lavers rose, and gave out the 22d hymn in the collection,—

“ Behold the Saviour of mankind
Nail'd to the shameful tree!
How vast the love that him inclined
To bleed and die for thee !”

This doubtless proceeded from a conscious feeling that to point the outcasts to the Saviour of sinners, could alone bring relief to his own mind or salvation to their souls.

Early in the year 1828, a period when the Lord had greatly revived his work on that station, Mr. Lavers proposed assembling the societies in the neighbourhood. The meeting took place, and the Saviour, according to his gracious promise, was present, and made the feast a feast of love. The fleeting moments were sedulously improved for religious exercises, of which the renewal of their covenant with God constituted an important part. The Holy Spirit, in answer to united prayer, descended in showers of blessing : several of those present experienced his quickening and consoling influence ; and one, who is now walking in the light of God's countenance, dates from that propitious season her new and heavenly birth.

One of the members of a family, residing in this vicinity, communicated to the Editor the following narrative :—

“ My parents, who were members of the Established

Church, and exemplary in their deportment, trained us up to a regular attendance at the house of God, and carefully inculcated in our minds the importance of moral duties. To this instruction, and these early habits, I was indebted, under Providence, for preservation from many excesses into which inexperienced youths so often fall. I rested satisfied, notwithstanding, till I was about twenty-five years of age, with a fair character and a routine of outward duty, wholly unacquainted with the power of religion and the necessity of a change of heart.

“ It was on a Sabbath afternoon early in 1815, finding the time pass heavily, that I roved to a village a few miles off, and coming to a house where I heard persons singing, curiosity led me to go in and hear the sermon. The Minister had not proceeded far in his subject, which was that of man’s depraved and lost condition by nature, before I became deeply convinced of sin, and felt that I had been living wholly without God in the world, saying to myself, ‘Peace, peace; when there was no peace.’ When I left the place, my convictions followed me: for several nights I found little rest, but at length they became so distressing, that I was unable to follow my usual employment. At first, I strove to forget what I had heard, but the attempt was vain; the arrow was too deeply fixed, and in the anguish of my spirit, I concluded that I must be lost.

“ After a fortnight passed in a state of mind which I cannot describe, I took courage, and opened my case to the Minister, hoping that he might give me some comfort; but this proved of no avail.

“ Agreeably to his advice, however, I again went to the place where I was first convinced: and, after the service followed him into the house, again told him my state, and earnestly asked if there could be any hope for me. ‘My brother,’ he replied, taking me by the hand, ‘you are just in the state to be saved; the very character

to come to Christ. Did you ever read Rom. x. 4—10? Now read it seriously and with prayer, and may the Holy Spirit enable you to appropriate the blessing! I took up the Bible, and never shall forget what were my feelings as I read those precious words, ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ I now saw, for the first time, how God could be ‘just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.’ The change I experienced was, indeed, *life from the dead*; my sense of guilt and misery gave place to ‘a peace which passeth understanding,’ and I ‘joyed in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I had now received the atonement.’

“I joined the little band amongst whom my soul had been set at liberty, and all the means of grace proved channels of strength and consolation, for I found the Lord very present; and often, in returning through the long dark lanes, my spirit was so refreshed and happy in God, that I even longed for death, to bear me away to Him whom my soul loved. This desire was probably increased by the opposition which followed my change of principles and conduct; my dear wife, and a sister whom I also tenderly loved, proved my greatest trials; and my father, whose chief concern was for my temporal welfare, often urged that my religion occupied too much of my time and thoughts, and that I might suffer from it by and by. But, for the unkindness of relatives, I found ample compensation in peace of conscience and communion with God.

“The salvation of my family was very near my heart, nor was it long before I experienced a gracious answer to prayer, which I received as a token of greater things to come. A few Christian friends being assembled under my roof, whilst one of them was earnestly pleading with the Lord on behalf of my wife, her heart was melted with contrition, so that she cried out for mercy. The

balm of the Gospel was applied; she was exhorted to believe in the Lord Jesus, and by faith she sought him, until she was enabled to rejoice in her adoption into the family of God.

“I must now acquaint you with the darkest part of my history. Shortly after this manifestation of the Lord’s goodness, my father, whose health had for some time been on the decline, departed this life, and left me that portion of his property which, as his eldest son, he had originally designed for me.

“In order to carry into effect the purport of my father’s will, I was obliged frequently to visit a large town, where my mind gradually became engrossed in the world. I soon lost all pleasure in things of a spiritual nature, so that I even ceased to attend the public ordinances. No language can express the misery and distress of mind which followed this departure from God. The Bible, formerly my delight, far from affording me any comfort, proved a messenger of terror; for all its denunciations seemed to stand out against me. While I was in this sad condition Mr. Lavers came into the Circuit. He sought me out, and with earnest entreaties and many tears implored me to return to the Lord and to his people, lest I should add to the catalogue of my transgressions, that of despairing of God’s mercy. Many times I attempted to hide myself, when after in vain seeking for me in the house, he would follow me where I was occupied in business and watch till I have been obliged to discover myself. He would then admonish and pray with me. At these seasons I felt some relentings, and I would then promise to seek the Lord in earnest. During a twelvemonth I continued in this undecided state, through the whole of which Mr. Lavers ceased not to follow me with his remonstrances and his prayers until I could resist no longer. Thus the prodigal was brought back to his Father’s house, and experienced once more a sense of his pardoning love.

“Clear and joyous was the witness of the Spirit that he had forgiven all my sins, and healed all my backslidings. But there was still a greater blessing, that of sanctification or a clean heart, the loss of which I deplored, and which I almost despaired of again realizing. Having named this apprehension to a pious female with whose family I had long been intimate, she answered with great solemnity, ‘So then, brother, you believe the Apostle speaks the truth, when he declares, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins; but that he is insincere when he adds, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*’ (1 John i. 9.) My understanding was then enlightened to comprehend the twofold blessing promised in that Scripture, and faith was given me to plead it, until I could testify that whilst whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, ‘If the Son make us free, then we are free indeed.’” (John viii. 34—36.)

The sister to whom allusion has been made, about the time at which her brother was reclaimed, became truly converted to God, and united herself to that society in connexion with which she had found “the pearl of great price.”

The following are selected from a variety of incidents illustrating the character and influence of Mr. Lavers’s pastoral visits and social intercourse.

Mr. Lavers manifested peculiar concern for the spiritual prosperity of Class-Leaders and Stewards; and it was his custom to meet as many of them as could attend in Buckland chapel on the Sunday morning, when he exhorted them as to their duty, concluding with prayer for a blessing on their classes, and particularly for the reclaiming of backsliders. The cases and states of individuals were much upon his heart, and for many he has been known to wrestle in prayer for hours together, both by day and by night; persevering for

months, and in some instances for years, until his desires were fulfilled by witnessing the wavering confirmed, or the backslider restored. One member in particular, who had grievously departed from the good way, Mr. Lavers followed with incessant expostulations, and subsequently by letters, in one of which, after portraying his awful condition, and its tremendous consequences, he added, that could he but indulge the hope that such a remembrance might prove the means of reclaiming him, he would willingly write him a letter with a pen dipped in his own blood. These affectionate and earnest remonstrances were ultimately blessed : the prodigal was reclaimed, and continued, by the grace of God, in the path of holiness, which has conducted him to the kingdom of his Father, where he now stands as a pillar in the heavenly temple, "to go no more out for ever."

Another young man, respectably brought up, but whose family had experienced a reverse of fortune, came to settle at Dover, in consequence of having received a promise of employment. It was soon ascertained that he had once known the Lord, and had been united with the society, but that he was then turning his back upon the Saviour and upon his people. No sooner was Mr. Lavers acquainted with the circumstance, than he sought him out, and requested he would meet him at a given time at his house, on urgent business. The young man came at the time appointed, when Mr. Lavers, with much feeling, pictured to him in true colours his real situation and apparent destiny. He then pleaded earnestly with the Lord in prayer on his behalf, until at length the stony heart was softened, and the hardened backslider converted into the humble penitent. He resolved, by the grace of God, to return to the path he had forsaken, and from that time he began a new life and a new conversation. Shortly after this great change, Providence directed his steps to

Folkestone, where he joined the Methodist society, and became a consistent and useful member. After a residence of about three years amongst them, by one of those distressing casualties which often prematurely hurry mortals home, he was removed from this probationary state in the vigour of youth, and in the prospect of more extended usefulness. During his illness, he manifested that he was divinely supported; and after bearing a clear and decisive testimony to the power and grace of Christ, with a firm reliance on him as a present Saviour, he exchanged this scene of suffering for a crown of glory.

Not only in the experience of the departed saint, but in that of his mother, the day of his death proved better than the day of his birth; (Eccles. vii. 1;) for his simple reliance on the merits of the Saviour and the hope that triumphed in the midst of the greatest agony, proved instrumental in leading her to the only refuge for sinners, and from that time she has persevered in the ways of the Lord, and in communion with his people.

One instance of Mr. Lavers's zeal for the conversion of souls, and of the power which he had in prayer with God, recorded by the Editor as having taken place at Folkestone, may not be inaptly introduced here.

One morning, in the summer of 1827, I accompanied him to see a young man in a deep decline. He appeared to have but little knowledge in theory, and none in experience, of the way of salvation. He acknowledged, in answer to our inquiries, that for many years he had rarely attended public worship, except now and then, from curiosity or to pass away an hour, he had looked into the Methodist chapel at Dover. Mr. Lavers had an interesting conversation with him, in which I occasionally took a part; and in the course of it such Scriptures were either read or quoted as we deemed suitable to his case. Mr. Lavers

then proposed that we should alternately engage in prayer on his behalf, adding, "Now let us wrestle until we prevail, for *the present* is always God's time to save." Whilst that servant of the Lord was pleading with him, the intercourse was opened between our souls and heaven. How long we tarried at the mercy-seat I cannot say, but it could not have been less than two hours. On rising from our knees he said, "My brother, I feel fully assured the Lord has given us that soul." The young man, who was quite indifferent on our entering, appeared to feel deeply, and much regretted our departure. A day or two after, Mr. Lavers again visiting Folkestone, called upon him, and being convinced from some circumstances elicited as to his experience, but too long to narrate, that he was the subject of a saving change, with a grateful and rejoicing heart brought me the tidings of the Lord's goodness. I should probably have sat down contented, but not so our excellent friend. "My dear brother," said he, "this blessing is vouchsafed to stimulate us to increased exertion, and to lead us to expect still greater things. You remember," added he, "a young man at —, who is very ill. Let us go to him immediately; who knows but the Lord may use us in rescuing another soul from the powers of darkness." This young man, contrary to all expectation, recovered, and has since emigrated to New-York; while he whom the Lord graciously gave to the prayers of his servant, has reached "a better country, that is, a heavenly." From the time that he received the grace of God in truth, he survived about four months, giving full and satisfactory evidence of a true and sound conversion, when, in the presence of some pious friends who had constantly visited him, he took his last triumphant flight, in full assurance of being "for ever with the Lord." This example of the riches of divine grace, and of the prevalence of the prayer of faith, is well known to many in different sections of the

church of Christ at Folkestone, who were constrained to admire so thorough a transformation, and to exclaim, with astonishment, "What hath God wrought!"

As becomes a faithful Minister, not only were Mr. Lavers's walks in society, but his very recreations subordinated to his main design, that of communicating spiritual good to his fellow-creatures. Not that the latter were frequent in recurrence, as may be inferred from the fact, that during two years residence in or near Dover, he found no leisure to examine the Roman fortifications, with the ancient groundworks and towers situate on those far-famed acclivities.

At a time when he was enfeebled by incessant labours, his attached friend, the Rev. William Box, then residing at Maidstone, persuaded Mr. Lavers to spend a week with him on the coast of France. On the day after their landing, they met a large party of Englishmen round the *table d'hôte*. Mr. Lavers, as became his character, implored a blessing on the repast, which occasioned some animadversion; but when his friend rose to return thanks, it was received as a signal of warfare. Several of the company proceeded to ridicule, and others to denounce, both the form and the reality of our holy religion. The spirit of Mr. Lavers was stirred within him, like that of the great Apostle when he saw the Athenians wholly given to idolatry: with a firm and impressive yet conciliatory manner, he advocated the cause of that Gospel which was dearer to him than life, and conjured them not to sport with holy things, whilst the very Heathen speak with reverence of their false deities and superstitious worship. Then, casting a penetrating look on those around him, he marked the struggle of conflicting emotions in the countenance of a young Scotsman. Perceiving the starting tear, which he strove in vain to conceal, Mr. Lavers rose, and whispering that he had something particular to communicate to him, left the room with his friend. The

young gentleman followed, and the three were shown into an adjoining apartment. Being seated, Mr. Lavers remarked that they were not at home in the society they had just left, and, if he were not mistaken, he had something to communicate that would meet his case, and that was, *a balm for a broken spirit*. His new companion, bursting into tears, observed, that if he alluded to the consolations of religion, he did indeed want them, but added a fear that they never would be his portion. He proceeded to state that he had been brought up by pious parents, who had carefully grounded him in the truths of religion, but coming to London, he settled in an office in which were some young men of infidel principles, with whom he became intimately acquainted. Not to dwell upon minutiae, their jeers and arguments, seconded by an auxiliary within, triumphed over the united force of education, reason, and religion; "forsaking the guide of his youth, and the covenant of his God," he imbibed their system, and bowed at the shrine of scepticism. Although he had visited Boulogne in a very debilitated state, that circumstance had failed to recall him to serious consideration; but the truths he had formerly received had been again revived by the forcible appeal to which he had recently listened. Mr. Lavers then gave him such instructions and cautions as he deemed best suited to his case, commending him by fervent prayer to the God of all grace, and presenting him before he parted with a diamond Testament, prized by Mr. Lavers, being the gift of a much valued friend, as a memento of his affectionate solicitude for his spiritual welfare. At his request Mr. Lavers gave him his address, and he promised to call upon him as soon as he returned to England. It is probable that he never lived again to cross the Channel, and that the sequel of the young Scotsman and the little Testament will not be developed until the great day, when every page of the book of

Providence and grace will be unfolded, and "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."

A member of the church at Stanford, who derived much profit from Mr. Lavers's ministry, (one of whose sisters acknowledges him as her spiritual father,) has recorded the decease of an individual in that neighbourhood as follows:—"I visited him in his last hours, and there was hope in his end. He attributed his conversion, instrumentally, to a conversation which Mr. Lavers held with him several years ago, under my roof." In this humble and devoted Christian's delineation of Mr. Lavers's character, there is one trait too *admirable*, in both senses of the word, to be passed by unnoticed. "There is not," it states, "one neglected opportunity for usefulness recorded against him on the tablet of my memory."

Well authenticated cases analagous to the foregoing might be adduced, where intercourse with this servant of God terminated in a decisive change of heart and life, which, with many more, for wise purposes wholly concealed for a season, will be proclaimed as upon the house-top at the final summing up of this world's history.

In the summer of 1827 Mr. Lavers was laid aside for a season by a violent attack of illness, which he described as producing such a distressing debility and prostration of the powers of mind and body, that but for divine support and consolation, must have rendered duty and even life itself a burden. By the blessing of God on the judicious treatment of his medical attendants, gratuitously afforded, he was so far recovered by the end of August as again to be enabled to resume his accustomed duties. But it pleased the Lord that his valuable public labours in this field should neither be uninterrupted nor of long continuance. The spiritual welfare of those kind friends who had successfully

exerted their medical skill on his behalf, lay much upon his heart; and with one of them, who visited him daily, he held many close and interesting conversations, which were generally closed by prayer.* Mr. Lavers, who was blessed with much of that love which "hopeth all things," hailed with delight the changes which shortly became manifest as the fruit of their intercourse; and this naturally tended to draw more closely the bond of union between them. In the month of December following, whilst in company with that gentleman, an accident occurred which, but for the interposition of a gracious Providence, might have proved fatal to them both. As they were returning from visiting a sick member at the entrance of Dover, the chaise in which they were riding was overturned, and they were both thrown out with considerable violence. His friend escaped with some slight bruises; but Mr. Lavers, falling under the chaise, received a severe contusion in the leg, which confined him for several months a prisoner to the house, where he was

* Copies of letters from Mr. Lavers to both these gentlemen are in the possession of the Editor. They breathe gratitude for the kind and disinterested attention which the Faculty has peculiarly shown to those occupied like themselves, though in different spheres, in remedying the evils which sin has inflicted on the great family of man. They also bear evidence of the deep regret, shared by every grateful and pious mind, that so many, emulating the Saviour's example, "who went about doing good," "healing all manner of sickness and of disease among the people," should continue willingly ignorant of the great Physician who has declared, "I am the Lord that healeth thee:" or, by undervaluing the doctrine of the atonement, the sole foundation of a sinner's acceptance with God, should virtually reject Him "by whose stripes we are healed." May that day speedily dawn upon our land, when the more perfect knowledge of the animal economy and of the theory and treatment of diseases shall appear harmoniously blended with the knowledge of that Gospel which "has brought life and immortality to light;" when, retaining all the benefit realized by our emersion from the night of barbarism, religion shall again be found combined with physic.

attended with great kindness and assiduity by his companion, who had been so graciously preserved.

There were, doubtless, other designs of mercy to which the Lord overruled these afflictive visitations of his faithful servant; but that which stands most conspicuous, and demands our admiration, is the introduction of the Gospel into St. Mary's poor-house. In the accomplishment of this object, his friend, who superintended the medical department of that institution, was made the favoured instrument. Under the sanction of the Governors, a weekly lecture was established, for the spiritual benefit of about two hundred inmates of that comfortable asylum. This was conducted by Mr. Lavers whilst he remained at Dover, with the assistance of his friend, Mr. Cheesman, who continued it until he left Dover, having been called to the work of the ministry. On this, the Governors, feeling for the spiritual wants of the people, solicited some of the Clergymen of the neighbouring parishes to undertake the duty; three of whom, although they resided many miles distant, promptly came forward to the work, and still faithfully discharge that duty; which, from the very circumstance of its being unaccompanied by the praise of men, will doubtless obtain a conspicuous place in the book of God's remembrance.

Let us now enter the sick chamber, that ordeal wherein the Christian Minister is peculiarly tried, and which Infinite Wisdom has connected with the increase both of the graces and of the reward of his faithful servants. Mr. Lavers was at this time an inmate of Mr. Mannering's family, at Buckland; and although his public labours were suspended for a time by illness, yet, during a considerable part of every day, his doors were open to such as stood in need of counsel, encouragement, or consolation; and many resorted thither. Persons of different religious communities, some of them moving in the higher walks of life, visited him from time to

time, to whom, after the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he expounded privately the things of the kingdom of God. (Gal. ii. 2.) And he was well qualified to conduct the awakened Israelite from the outward court through the temple of the Priests, into the holiest of all; or, after the pattern of the Jewish lawgiver, to guide him through the three days' journey, "that he might find him a place of rest." In order that prayer might be rendered more definite, and consequently more profitable, it was his custom before he engaged, to name the blessing which he peculiarly needed, and then to ask each person present, "What is your petition at the throne of grace?" or, "What blessing shall I ask for you?" He would then take up their respective cases in order, and plead for them as one who held constant intercourse with heaven, and "as a Prince, he had power with God." At other times, in an easy and familiar manner, first speaking of his own experience, and then inquiring into that of those who sat near him, he would insensibly mould the social circle into a class-meeting, or a love-feast; in which the reality of that important but too much neglected doctrine of the church militant, "the communion of saints," was often realized. Some one or more were then called upon to plead for a blessing, and these favoured seasons frequently proved, in the experience of those present, "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

Besides these exercises, he instituted a week-evening prayer-meeting in the house, at which he was accustomed to expound some portion of the word of God.

In this, and in every family where he sojourned, he established and strove to perpetuate the good old custom of reading a portion of Scripture with prayer, after dinner, before the family separated.

His conversation was eminently spiritual, and invariably tended to edification; for his vivacity never degenerated into lightness, nor his fidelity into de-

traction ; and in him the absent always found a friend. Mr. Lavers afforded a striking proof of the fact, that wherever the spirit of holiness dwells, it must be felt. As the occasion required, his aspect resembled the two-edged sword, carrying conviction to sinners at ease in Zion, but comfort and encouragement to those who abounded in the work of the Lord : hence, according to their state and character, they either dreaded the frown which love assumed, or courted the smile in which it delighted. There were seasons, and those not few, in which the manifestation of his communion with heaven was peculiarly bright and attractive ; when “ the beauty of the Lord ” was upon him, as upon Moses when he came from the mount of God : when, filled with joy and consolation, he exhibited in living characters the glowing description given by the author of the “ Task : ”—

“ When one, who holds communion with the skies,
Has fill'd his urn where those pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings :
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.
So when a ship, well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvass furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world,
'Twere vain inquiring to what port she went,
The gale informs us, laden with the scent.”

The family at Buckland were conscious of the privilege they enjoyed in entertaining such a guest ; and they evinced it, not only by studying to guard his health and promote his comfort, but by affording him every alleviation in their power during a severe and protracted illness. Mrs. M.'s mother, in particular, who formed a part of the family, manifested towards him the affection and the tenderness of a parent. Although she had attained the age of seventy, she

resolved to take upon herself the duties of a nurse, which she performed with the greatest cheerfulness and assiduity, as long as Mr. Lavers remained at Dover.

Mr. Lavers passed nearly two years under the same roof with this devoted woman, whose greatest delight was that of ministering to the saints; and she nursed him during his long illness by night as well as by day, with the most devoted and unremitting attention. Her own ease, and often even needful refreshment, she disregarded until all his wants were supplied, and she rarely presented him with either food or medicine without first imploring on her knees the blessing of God upon it.

The benevolence and chastened hilarity of soul that beamed in her countenance, diffused over all around her a sunshine of peace and joy: insomuch that they were wont to say, "Her sun never goes down."

CHAPTER V.

*Extracts from Mr. Lavers's Correspondence whilst in the
Dover Circuit.*

THE great object to which the pen, as well as the lips of a Minister of the Gospel should be subservient, to adopt the language of the celebrated philosopher, is "the edification of those whose concernment it is to *know things as they are, and to do what they ought.*"

The unremitted labours of the subject of this memoir, of which an extensive correspondence formed no inconsiderable part, left him but little leisure to study the art of rhetoric or the elegance of composition. If, therefore, that portion of it now submitted to the public fail of successfully enduring the ordeal which nothing short of "perfect good taste" can undergo, it cannot fail to reflect honour upon the writer, who chose rather to benefit others than to shine himself.

Few, probably, will be found in this sphere of duty who have adhered more closely to the injunctions of an inspired Apostle ; since there will be found in the following letters "words easy to be understood," and a "comparing of spiritual things with spiritual;" whilst they carry upon their face the impress, "for good to edification."

It might be affirmed of him who penned them, in his measure, and as an under shepherd, that "the common people heard him gladly;" and wherever found, they whose appropriate language most effectually conveys the mysteries of our holy religion to the humblest capacity, give promise of the most extensive usefulness. For the encouragement of such it stands recorded on the sacred page, that He who spake as never man spake,

was himself anointed by the Holy Spirit "*to preach the Gospel to the poor.*"

To his Parents.

Hythe, Nov. 25th, 1826.

MY DEAR PARENTS,

IT is with mingled feelings of hope and fear that I now address you. How am I to interpret your long silence, so as to conclude that your affection towards me continues unabated? Surely the bond of nature cannot be weakened, much less broken, by the distance between Blackauton and Dover! I am often ready to exclaim, Had I the wings of a dove, I would speedily take my flight, nor rest till I had reached the well-known cottage, and found a ready entrance to its much-loved inmates. In the assurance of your undiminished affection I should then find relief from the anxiety which now oppresses me. It is my happiness, however, to know that my parents love me, and perhaps they have already forwarded a letter to Dover which will dispel all my fears. I feel very deeply my dear mother's illness; and earnestly do I desire again to converse with her on the most important of all subjects, and to point her to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." The first desire of my heart is, that you, my dear parents, may flee from the wrath to come. I write with trembling lest I should wound you; but I dare not conceal my fears lest you should have only the form of godliness, without its saving power. If old habits remain unchanged and the tempers unsanctified, how can I feel happy, especially when I read in the Bible, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new?" O say not of any sin, "Is it not a little one?" We know that a small leak may

sink the finest vessel; and one sin, unrepented of, and unforsaken, will ruin the soul for ever. The law declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." How then can any one escape, unless he looks by faith to Jesus as his surety? He paid the full penalty of that law which we have broken, for "the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." Come then to Jesus! receive him as your Saviour. He waits to be gracious. O listen to his invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Does my dear mother require patience to bear her sufferings? This can only be obtained by coming to Jesus. In answer to earnest prayer he will give her all needful grace and strength, and enable her to say, "He doth all things well." Let me affectionately beseech you to lay these things to heart, and to give the Lord no rest, till you know and feel that your sins are forgiven. Delay not to seek this blessing, since the Lord has said, "Then shall ye find me, when ye seek after me with your whole heart."

It will give you pleasure to hear that I find in my present station much cause for thankfulness. When young, I sought first, by the grace of God, "his kingdom and righteousness," and all other things have been added unto me. I have good health and spirits, a comfortable home, kind friends, and a competent provision. Above all, I have a gracious Saviour to intercede for me, and his word and Spirit to guide me.

That the Lord may bless you with his converting grace, which he will do, if you sincerely seek it, and make you fit for his kingdom of glory, is the constant prayer of

Your affectionate Son,

WILLIAM.

To the Editor.

Folkestone, March 15th, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WILL no longer delay sending you the little treatise on Christian Perfection. Since your departure I have removed to this place. I very sensibly felt your absence, notwithstanding the intercourse I enjoyed with Mr. Hanson's family whilst they continued at Dover; but now they too have left. Alas! how changeable are all things here below. Christian friendship, next to the image and fulness of Christ in the soul, is the brightest resemblance of heaven to be enjoyed in this imperfect state; but even that has its sorrows as well as its joys, and this I know from experience. The mind of man is so constituted that it is always in pursuit of happiness: not content with the enjoyment of the present, nor in reflecting on the past, it is actively engaged in anticipating the future. How reviving are the streams which flow through the channel of Christian communion and fellowship even here; whilst as pilgrims and sojourners we anticipate the consummation, in fulness of joy, and pleasures at God's right hand for evermore.

Greatly should I rejoice to lay down my pen and commune with you face to face; busy memory often paints you and your dear family as very near to the mind's eye. Many seasons of sweet and holy communion are still fresh in my recollection, and the remembrance brings, as it were, a feast of love to my soul. Although separated in body, still are we present in spirit; and by faith we anticipate that happy day when the exiles shall be called home, and their happiness shall never more suffer interruption. I can truly say, I taste every moment the sweetness of a Saviour's love. How can I sufficiently evince my gratitude? "I am crucified with Christ:" let me then speak his praise and publish his name for ever. My earnest prayer for you and dear

Mrs. E. is, that you may reckon yourselves strangers and pilgrims here below, strive together for the faith of the Gospel, and glory in nothing save in the cross of Christ: thus you will be enabled to enjoy God in all things.

I am, my dear Sir,
Yours in the common Saviour,
WILLIAM LAVERS.

These sentiments are thus graphically delineated by Josiah Conder, in "The Reverie:"—

"Who can tell?—that fervent blessing!
Angels, did ye hear it rise?
Do ye thus, your love expressing,
Watch o'er human sympathies?"

"Do ye some mysterious token
To the kindred bosom bear;
And, to what the heart has spoken,
Wake a note responsive there?"

Extract from a Letter to his Parents.

Dover, Sept. 28th, 1827.

My dear mother's affliction excites my warmest sympathy. It has been impressed on my mind, that she will not be removed hence until I come to Blackauton, and receive her parting blessing. Pardon me, my dear parents, if I once more express my anxiety respecting your eternal state. The only answer I can obtain to all my anxious inquiries is, "You hope you are born again." Forgive me, if on so momentous a subject, I cannot rest satisfied with such an answer. Were you indeed born from above, born of God, you would surely know it, for you would feel as in a new world: like Bunyan's pilgrim, your back would be turned on the city of destruction, and your face toward the

celestial country. The Spirit of God would witness with your spirit that you were his children, and instead of the creature and created good engrossing your affections, they would be set on things above. I have often requested that you would invite some pious neighbour to converse and pray with you; and it is very painful to be denied so small a favour. I know you love me; but this, highly as I prize it, I could forego, if you would but love Christ and his people. I hope you will accept the little offering that accompanies these lines, and not again pain me by returning thanks.

I am much better, and happy as to both worlds.

To Mr. John Roberts.

Dover, Jan. 14th, 1828.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I RECEIVED your kind letter of the 25th ult., and truly it was "as cold water to a thirsty soul." I have not forgotten your remarks on the nature and importance of the Christian ministry, and trust I shall have cause to rejoice through eternity for being favoured with such a faithful and affectionate adviser.

My heart has often sunk under a sense of its vast responsibility, especially when considering my own weakness and unprofitableness; but when I call to mind that with the Lord is mercy and grace for seasonable aid, I look up and take courage.

It was a great trial so soon to leave the endeared society at Ashburton, although it turned out to my advantage. My chief object has been to store my mind, and add to my experience, that I might be made increasingly useful. Besides, we have little prospect of learning our defects amongst those who are insensible to them, from the imperceptible influence of early association or intimate friendship. The kindness evinced by

our Maidstone friends was highly gratifying to me. At their last Missionary meeting they proposed that I should visit them once in the month, by an exchange of Preachers; but I so soon get wedded to the duties of a Circuit, that even a short absence would be painful. You will rejoice to hear that my feeble labours have been owned and blessed in both Circuits, in the most satisfactory and perceptible manner, to many. To God be ascribed all the glory! Your account of the Circuit which was the scene of my earliest labours, is not very encouraging. If Methodism should ever fall, it will be through the inconsistencies of its professed friends, for it meets its opponents well. Are we not in danger, as Methodists, of resting in the spirit of the Jews of old, boasting that we have *Wesley to our Father*, without considering the end of his conversation, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?" Christian perfection is one of our chief glories: unless therefore, as a body, we go on unto perfection, the glory will depart from us, and we shall miss the crown at last. Is there not ground for apprehension, when, in an entire Circuit, so few persons can be found who live in the enjoyment of the blessing of entire sanctification, or perfect love? whilst some of long standing in the society exclaim, "How can these things be?" Both Ministers and Leaders should cry aloud, and spare not: since, if through our neglecting to declare the whole counsel of God, our people should fall short of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, what account shall we give of our stewardship? I trust that you continue steadfast, that your spirituality and love to the saints increase, and that you are diligent in pointing out to all within the sphere of your influence, the way of salvation.

I have suffered much lately from an attack of illness, which for a time exhausted my strength and spirits; but, by the blessing of God, I have now recovered my former tone and vigour, and feel like a new man.

During my illness I was encompassed with mercies ; the best medical attendance, and the most devoted care ; but, above all, I was favoured with such a sense of the Lord's presence, that I was willing either to depart and to be with Christ, or to continue longer here, if it might be more profitable to his church. May the God of peace be with you and yours for ever.

I remain, &c.,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Editor.

Dover, February 10th, 1828.

MY DEAR SIR,

I THANK you for your last letter, especially for your close and faithful interrogatories ; since those who are called upon to solve the difficulties and remove the doubts of others, can never look too closely into their own experience. After examining the foundation on which my peace and hope are built, I find the witness in myself, and, believing in the Son of God, I have life through his name. Bringing my state and character to that infallible test, the word of God, it still proves to me a source of consolation and a sword of defence. If those who have been too often cast down by the accuser of the brethren would but wield this mighty weapon with the hand of faith, they would soon see their spiritual enemies flee before them. Satan is a vanquished foe ; and those who resist him, steadfast in the faith, shall find that he can no longer disturb their peace or check their progress.

I will now endeavour to answer your inquiry as to the manner in which those difficulties were removed, which formerly prevented my walking at liberty in the highway of holiness. For some time after I had received the grace of God in truth, I was the subject of

severe spiritual conflicts, from the assaults of Satan without, and the remains of corruption within; the which I was enabled to resist or conquer, with very different measures of success. But a closer and more prayerful study of the Scriptures, particularly of St. Paul's Epistles, convinced me that a fluctuating experience and a state in which Satan and the world alternately obtain the advantage, or where our victory is doubtful, cannot bring glory to God, or abiding peace to the soul. The opening of Heb. vi. was one of the passages which led me to that conclusion; for at that time I had too frequent occasion to "lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." Connecting with this the statement given in Gal. v. 17, 18, I discovered that Christians in whom the flesh so lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, that they cannot do the things that they would, have not as yet received the grace which bringeth salvation, or have fallen from it, and are again brought in a measure under the law. The state of the former, I perceived to be drawn by the same Apostle, in Rom. vii. 5—25, omitting the sixth verse, which is a key to chap. viii.: whilst the Galatian church exhibited that of the latter, for they are described as "desiring to be under the law," and as being "again entangled in the yoke of bondage."

On the other hand, I deliberately weighed those numerous and decisive portions of holy writ which either command, implore, or promise the blessing of sanctification; such as should be universal in its influence, and glorious in its effects; together with the various and cogent motives by which the pen of inspiration has urged and enforced it.

By these means the Spirit of God graciously enlightened my understanding, and opened my heart to welcome the doctrine which, as Methodists, we denominate that of a *full salvation*. Seeking "to be filled with

the knowledge of God's will," I soon experienced the way of holiness to be more and more delightful. I was enabled confidently to plead the precious promises, to make proof of the efficacy of the blood of the atonement, and of the sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, and happily experienced that according to my faith so it was done unto me. Thus I have found it possible, through Christ strengthening me, by faith to walk in him, as I at the first received him; and I am privileged to testify to his praise, that "out of his fulness" I now receive, "and grace for grace." I was much encouraged by intercourse with some advanced Christians when I most needed such help, whose example afforded a strong confirmation of the truth, and led me to seek an entire deliverance from the carnal mind, with full conformity to the mind and will of God; or, to adopt the language of Scripture, "that the body of sin might be destroyed," and "that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

No truth is more distinctly written, or shines with brighter lustre on the inspired page, than *the sanctifying nature of the doctrine of atonement*. I am persuaded that none who study the Scriptures with humility, in a spirit of prayer, and with a desire to know and to do the will of God, can fail of being led to welcome a present, full, and free salvation from the curse of the law, and from the power of sin, the world, and Satan, with the entire sanctification of their nature, as the great and crowning blessing of the Gospel. I would affectionately advise you to declare what the Lord may reveal to you on this all-important subject so long as you persevere in the pursuit, and thirst for the enjoyment of it.

I invariably found my own soul encouraged and strengthened in proclaiming it, at a time when I was

indeed pressing after, but had not realized, the blessing.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours, in the bond of the Gospel,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

It is to be regretted that the standard of Christian holiness is generally fixed too low : still it is consolatory to know that the doctrine referred to in the foregoing letters, both has been and is virtually maintained by all the saints in Christ Jesus. Faithful Ministers have proclaimed and enforced it; the Established Church has embodied it in her Liturgy. In vain shall we search for a richer comment on the Apostle's prayer in 1 Thess. v. 23, than in the sublime collect at the opening of the Communion Service. The sweet Psalmists of our British Israel have embalmed it in their sacred songs. To extol it and excite to its attainment, the venerable Wesleys raised to its highest notes their tuneful lyre. Among others, the pious bard of Olney thus writes in unison,—

“ Thee we reject, unable to abide

Thy purity, till pure as Thou art pure :

Made such by Thee, we love Thee for that cause

For which we shunn'd and hated Thee before.”

To his Parents.

Charlton Road, Feb. 19th, 1828.

SHOULD I be spared to visit Blackauton, I hope, in the strength of the Lord, to cry aloud, “ Prepare to meet thy God ! ” I am solemnly pledged to fight against sin wherever I see it; and although I have hitherto met with but little success amongst my own family, by divine grace I will not cease to raise my voice against it. Sometimes I am cheered with the hope that when we meet, I shall find you seeking your happiness in God. For either of my parents to die unrenowned in heart would be to me a greater trial than

any that could befall me. Does Cousin J., or any other pious person, visit and pray with you? He that searches the heart alone knows how long and how earnestly I have desired this. I hope my mother will not feel uneasy on my account: did she but know the kind attention I have received since my accident, she would cease to feel so deeply for me. But what am I saying? Who can estimate a mother's tenderness but one who has a mother's heart? Let not my beloved mother distress herself, but cast all her care concerning me upon the Lord; then her mind will be kept in perfect peace. I recommend that of which I have experienced the blessedness. I have been tried, and that severely, but I have not followed "a cunningly devised fable;" and when my name is cast out as evil, I think of Him who, for my sake, was "despised and rejected of men," and am not only resigned but thankful. He "endured the cross, and despised the shame," for the joy of "bringing many sons unto glory." And of what moment is it if we are lightly esteemed of men, when we enjoy the love of Christ in our hearts now, and the sweet assurance that he will be our portion for ever?

I am fearful that you are denying yourselves, in order that you may leave your houses unincumbered. Will your children be ultimately benefited if you suffer in order to accomplish this? My dear father, if you leave behind what you ought to use with thanksgiving; should you assign any portion of it to me, I should not dare to touch it, lest it should prove a curse and not a blessing.

To Mrs. E.

Charlton-Road, Dover, March 17th, 1828.

MY DEAR MADAM,

A REFERENCE to the basis on which our friendship was grounded, that of a mutual care for each other,

will convey to your mind an assurance that you are all daily on my heart. When desirous of holding communion with the little band of pilgrims so graciously united at Folkestone, I take out your letters, read and pray over them, not omitting thanks and praises to the God of our mercies. Whilst our former conversations recur to my mind, and I seem again to hear your living answers, busy memory whispers something is still wanting. I then call into my succour an old and tried friend, named Resignation; she enters, and in a moment all is calm and peace.

It is a mercy that in our correspondence our high calling is the theme which swallows up minor subjects, as Aaron's rod devoured all the others. May we constantly regard Christ's glory as our great end, remembering he has bought us with a price: this will prevent darkness and distraction of mind; since we shall so live and walk by faith as to say, whether the animal spirits rise or fall, "Thou God seest me!" Thou God lovest me! Rest assured that such is the sweetness and the fulness of divine grace, that we may so "ask and receive that our joy may be full," notwithstanding the paradoxical truth, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Exercise faith upon the promises, and even if faint be still pursuing, and a faithful covenant-keeping God will bring you into the possession of his great salvation. "Fear not, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom:" see that you fully receive it, and guard against grieving the Spirit of God, by entertaining the thought that the unworthy are unwelcome. Rather, I say, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark;" enter into the holiest; for now the "tabernacle of God is with men," and "the accuser of the brethren is cast down." Christ is preparing your heart to make him room, and if you welcome the King of glory, he will set up his throne there, and proclaim, "Behold, I make all things new!" Your letter con-

vinces me, though you perhaps designed it not, that the work of grace within is real and increasing : true love to the Saviour will invariably produce the effects you speak of. Whoever calls this a carnal view, so far holds with antichrist. " Hereby know we the Spirit of God," &c. (1 John iv. 2, 3.)

It was needful that Christ should come in the flesh, for otherwise he had never come in the spirit : and if we reject what some call the " fleshly part " of revelation, what they misname spirituality will but exalt and puff up ; whereas true scriptural views of the atoning work of the Saviour at once humble and sanctify the soul.

Saving faith, like the grain of mustard seed, is at the first so small, that some overlook it, and so low that others tread it down ; but since Christ descended even to the Virgin's womb, let us seek to be conformed to him in humility. Yet faith, though always simple and lowly, looks high, even to perfect love to God and man. It is at once a passive and an active grace. It can wait at Calvary in a lowly imploring attitude. How delightful is it thus to abide under the cross, till we catch the healing stream, and breathe the air of heaven. There omnipotence arms us for the fight, and, " strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus," we turn to flight the armies of the aliens, and are made " more than conquerors." I beseech you to receive by faith the reconciliation, and enter into a present rest. The Lord now invites and draws you : reject not the proffered blessing because some exclaim, " The Lord's time is not yet come." Glory be to his name, I feel it is fully come, even the day of Pentecost, with the promise of the Father. O taste and see the goodness of our God. Here are the grapes of Eschol, the wine of the kingdom, which rejoices the heart, whilst Jesus says to the humble seeking soul, " This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Whilst we

abide in him, he will not fail to rest in his love towards us, seeing he hath inclined us to trust in his name. This state proves a Sabbath to the hireling, a Canaan to the exhausted pilgrim. "Come then, for all things are now ready!" "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Be happy whilst you may; now receive your portion as a daughter of Abraham: this will render crosses delightful, remove everything grievous from the commandment, and make duty gladness. I was much profited by some of your remarks, especially those connected with that soul-reviving quotation from Isaiah xxii. 24, "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons." My spirit cries, Amen! Do you recognise the following passage, "It appears to me, that whilst seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, we should no more look to it as forming any part of the ground of our justification, than if we had never performed one good work." Keep to this, or we are undone. I might add, that our obedience is as far from being the *medium* as the *ground* of our justification, since "God justifieth the ungodly that believe in Jesus." I trust you will proclaim this doctrine to all the ladies who, with you, are seeking the consolation of Israel. Cultivate, I entreat you, a love of sympathy and commiseration for all, and a love of complacency and delight in such as excel in virtue. Thus seek to be a follower of that God who is "good to all, and whose tender mercy is over all his works."

I remain, my dear Madam,

Your faithful servant, for Christ's sake,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Charles John, the Son of an intimate Friend.

Charlton Road, Dover, March 27th, 1828.

MY DEAR JOHN,

I WAS much gratified on receiving your affectionate letter : for although you are by far the youngest of my correspondents, you are not the least beloved. My heart's affections are much drawn out towards you, from the great regard I have for your parents, and from the hope I cherish that you will soon rank amongst the true disciples of the holy Jesus, who says, " Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your soul."

Many are ashamed of this Jesus : do not you think such persons act as absurdly as a King would do, were he to be ashamed of his crown ?

Now, strange as it may appear to you, this foolishness is bound up in the heart of every child ; for so says the Scripture. (Prov. xxii. 15.) Surely, then, we should pray earnestly to the Lord to take it away, and to give us a new, that is, a clean heart ; or, as your favourite hymn expresses it,—

" Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."

How happy will this make us ; whilst it is impossible that the passionate, the hard-hearted, or the proud, can ever have peace. If others around us are so, we must pity and pray for them, remembering that however vile and wicked men may be, they are still *our brethren*. I entreat you, if you love your parents, if you prize my affection, but especially if you love Christ, and wish to please him, to pray for any of the servants, and any of your neighbours, who appear to neglect " the one thing needful."

Above all, ask those whom you think God has blessed with a new heart, to pray particularly for you. Do you not find that when you would do good, evil is

present with you, and that the evil often gets the mastery? Then let this convince you how much you need to pray yourself, and that Christians should pray for you. Be sure not to oppose, but rather receive thankfully, every effort made by your kind parents or friends to make you wise and good, useful and happy. Often think how Jesus Christ laboured, and taught, and prayed for sinners. Do you ask what more he did? He died, even the painful accursed death of the cross. Do you ask whether he suffered this for you? Yes, my dear John, you may be quite sure of that, because he shed his precious blood even for the chief of sinners. Now, if with a heart truly sorry for every sin, you really believe and depend upon what the Saviour has done and suffered, "*you shall be saved*," that is, pardoned and made holy. And remember, that Jesus Christ not only died for your sins, but is gone up to heaven to prepare a place for you, and, if you pray for it, he will give you his good Spirit, to prepare you for that happy place!

Now what do you think of his great goodness? O! try to love him more than your own life: consider, although we deserve nothing from him but hell, it is he who gives you life and health, and parents and friends; all the comforts you enjoy, and all the blessings you can hope for.

I long to see you like those Christians who delight in the word and the service of God, and in sending Missionaries abroad to tell poor heathen boys and girls of the love and grace of the Saviour.

I trust you will pray for me, as I always do for you, and that you will write to me again before I get well, else I may not find time to answer you; and if this letter is not plain enough, you have only to tell me, and I will try to write more plainly, since I am,

My dear John,

Your affectionate Friend,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Miss Hogben.

Lyminge, April 29th, 1828.

MY DEAR SARAH,

I WAS much gratified by reading the pleasing letter your dear parents recently received from you, and I am thankful that you still remember me with affection. You are often present to my mind ; and my prayer for you is, that the Lord would graciously enlighten your understanding, awaken your conscience, and renew your heart.

Were it not that your dear uncle and aunt watch over you with kind solicitude, I should have many fears on your account. Pride, vanity, and the spirit of the world, are too generally found in boarding-schools ; and the children of pious parents not unfrequently form associations there which prove most unfavourable to the nurture and growth of the humble self-denying spirit of the Gospel. Your relations are very desirous that you should choose for your companions those young persons who are seeking to know and please the Lord ; and you recollect who has said, “ He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.” Let me entreat you constantly to keep in memory those precious Scriptures which I have often heard you repeat with so much pleasure, agreeably to the precept given 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

Many prayers are offered up for you, my dear Sarah, that you may early become the subject of godly sorrow for sin, and of saving faith in the atonement. Be persuaded to seek your happiness in Christ ; steadfastly resolve to take up your cross ; confess your attachment to him, and seek for grace to follow him : then you will soon find that “ his service is perfect freedom,” and you will experience a peace within which the world can neither give nor take away. Let the tenth verse of Psalm li. be your daily petition, and never rest till you are made *a new creature*.

The most effectual way of living to purpose, is to live for eternity: let all your time be diligently and profitably employed: remember that industry and true religion always go hand in hand, and that a slothful servant is a wicked servant.

You will rejoice to hear that I am at length recovered from the effects of my accident, whereby I have been laid aside from public duty for three months. But for the Lord's goodness, a fall under my circumstances must have proved fatal. May we learn from such events the importance of being always ready for an exchange of worlds.

Was it not, think you, in answer to your prayers, as well as those of other kind friends, that I am so far restored? Then let us never cease to pray until prayer shall end in praise.

Believe me, my dear Sarah,

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Mr. J. Roberts.

Charlton Road, Dover, June 11th, 1828.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I THANK you for your affectionate letter, particularly for your excellent remarks on confidence in God, and on the certainty of the equitable distribution of future rewards. With respect to the former, I have been graciously preserved for many years from those distressing doubts of which many sincere seekers often complain. Under the present trying dispensation my mind has been kept in perfect peace, and, thanks be to God, it flows as a river, being constantly replenished by those streams "which make glad the city of God." My spiritual comfort is never interrupted by the frown of heaven, or the chidings of my reconciled Father. I walk in the light of life; my sun is never obscured, nor

does my moon withdraw her shining. O wondrous grace ! The chief of sinners is numbered amongst the happiest of saints. You encourage me to trust in the Lord for body and soul, for time and for eternity. Blessed be his name, I find no difficulty in doing this, for "I know whom I have believed." (2 Tim. i. 12.) On the subject of future rewards, we are of one mind. I am satisfied, although there will be an amazing disproportion between the services and sufferings, and the rewards which God will graciously bestow upon his faithful servants, there will nevertheless be a close connexion between the one and the other : that, whilst "a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose its reward," "he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully;" and "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." Here "the glory of children are their fathers:" hereafter, it is most probable this rule will be reversed, and that the glory of fathers will be the children whom they shall have begotten in the Gospel; for we are assured that "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

I often look back, and meditate with grateful joy upon the Lord's goodness, manifested in my early conversion; which is heightened by the consideration that he "counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." In the midst of many snares and dangers he has preserved me, causing me to stand where even the mighty have fallen.

On a review of the past, I am constrained to confess with humiliation, that although, by the grace of God, my chief motive has been the glory of his name, yet other considerations, lawful in themselves, have not always been kept in due subordination. I have suffered to pass unimproved many opportunities, never more to return, of snatching brands from the burning. It is a humbling consideration that Christians should so often

bring themselves into the predicament of the Prophet, "As thy servant was busy here and there, he (the man) was gone!" (1 Kings xx. 40.) Besides, whatever I have been enabled to do in the service of the Lord since he has made me happy in the enjoyment of himself, has been accompanied with many short-comings and imperfections; hence,

"Excluded is my every boast,
My glory swallow'd up in shame."*

If, by means of this visitation, I go hence, and you see me no more, remember, I die at the cross, the unworthy associate of the penitent thief; but should I recover, I trust you will find me glorying only in the cross of Christ. "He is all my salvation, and all my desire:" "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." My strength is gradually returning, and I am amply provided with everything calculated to promote it. Prayer is made for me continually by many of the Lord's people, and I lie passive in his hands who is "God all-sufficient." O cousin, labour more ardently than ever to save immortal souls.

Yours in the best bonds,
WILLIAM LAVERS.

* Mr. Lavers had learned the mystery of the seraphim in the Prophet's vision, Isai. vi. 12. They had each six wings; but whilst twain sufficed them to fly at their Maker's bidding, *twice twain* were employed to denote their reverential awe and deep prostration as they stood in the presence of God.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Lavers visits London.—He retires from the Itinerancy in consequence of ill-health.—His zeal and efforts for usefulness.—He is instrumental in forming a Society at Norwood.—His partial recovery, and his labours in the Dartmouth Circuit.—Extracts from his Correspondence.

THERE is a trait of character of such vital importance to the Christian, more especially to the Christian Minister, that no fervency of zeal, or eminence of talent, can atone for its absence, whilst its presence arrays them in brighter colours, and may be denominated the girdle of the graces. It is *consistency*. This virtue manifests itself by a harmony in his words and actions, and by a congruity between the commencement and the close of his labours and his life.

It was this principle, blending with the tide of Christian affection, which induced Mr. Lavers, although unable to walk, to occupy two days in visiting the members of the society, previous to his quitting Dover. In these visits, the writer, who had participated in the hallowed intercourse of the sick chamber, was privileged to accompany him. His last words, for such they proved in the case of most whom he addressed, received additional force from the circumstance under which they were delivered, and were calculated to prove “as goads, or as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, given from one shepherd.” That the Lord crowned his labours on this station with success might be corroborated from the testimony of one of his intimate friends, that he has seldom attended a public meeting in the London or Kent districts, without receiving tidings of

some persons to whom the subject of these pages had been made a blessing.

At the latter end of July, 1828, Mr. Lavers visited London for the benefit of his health. His fourth year in the itinerancy having been completed in the month of August in the preceding year, it appears remarkable that he should have declined attending Conference, when, in accordance with the standing rule, he would have been received into Full Connexion. This omission probable arose partly from his mind being absorbed in the duties of his calling, and partly from an expectation that the ensuing Conference would be held in London, which would afford him an opportunity of visiting his friends. It is to be regretted that he did not adopt the usual course, and thereby secure that provision to which Ministers in Full Connexion are entitled, when incapacitated by illness from prosecuting their laborious duties.

When his case came before Conference, his health being inadequate to the duties of a circuit, he received a donation from the Auxiliary Fund, and was recommended to rest from the work for a twelvemonth, to return to it again in the event of his recovery.

Although, to a cursory observer, especially to one who knows hardship but by name, there may appear nothing peculiar in the circumstances of this faithful servant of the church ; he who has "felt the sting of sorrow" will sympathize with a condition which it requires no ordinary measure of faith and patience to support with equanimity.

To preach resignation to ourselves and to others, when in prosperity, is comparatively easy ; it is to defy the tempest when the sea is calm and the gale propitious ; but the point is, to reduce it to practice ; and, when the billows of adversity rise and swell, to ride composed and tranquil through the storm, though upon the wreck of our fondest hopes.

“The floods lifted up their voice : the floods lifted up their waves : the Lord on high *was* mightier :”—

“ In the midst of the pitiless storm
One appear'd who was ‘ mighty to save !’
On the rough waste of waters he rear'd his bright form,
And he trod on the fathomless wave.

“ In his look, in his words, was a charm
Which commanded the tempest to cease ;
The turbulent billows were hush'd to a calm,
And within and without there was peace.”

Being blessed with an excellent constitution, Mr. Lavers probably anticipated, notwithstanding his profuse expenditure of strength, being spared to proclaim, for years to come, the glad tidings of salvation. But this wide and sudden reverse of condition, with the rapid decline of his health, and the fear of surviving his usefulness, far from overwhelming him, issued in the development and the heightening of those graces which, comparable to gold of Ophir, are refined in the furnace of affliction.

In the family under whose roof he passed several months from this period, Mr. Lavers manifested, under accumulated trials, not simply a resigned, but a grateful and rejoicing spirit ; nor were the humility and devotedness with which he entered upon a circumscribed and lowly walk of usefulness less apparent.

The repose of a week from his arrival at Denmark-Hill more than sufficed, in Mr. Lavers's opinion, to recruit his exhausted strength. He immediately began to inquire with anxiety for some sphere of usefulness within the compass of his physical powers, as his medical advisers had recommended, for a season, the suspension of his pulpit labours.

Amongst some pious friends he met with the most cordial reception, and each introduction increased an acquaintance which became, almost daily, more exten-

sive. The mornings were now passed in visiting different persons pointed out to him as standing in need of instruction, and the day was usually closed in a social meeting, with the word of God and prayer.

Amongst the families who highly esteemed his character and prized his ministry, was one that expressed deep interest for the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of Norwood. This village, in the vicinity of the metropolis, might well excite their sympathy, since its picturesque scenery, pure atmosphere, and salubrious chalybeate, formed a strong and melancholy contrast to its spiritual destitution and lack of adequate culture.

In former years a Methodist society was established there; but the fire was soon extinguished, notwithstanding some few endeavoured, for a time, to fan the dying embers.

At his first visit he was introduced to a lady, whose catholic spirit embraced with equal warmth of Christian affection all who sincerely loved the Saviour, and whose house had long been open for religious exercises. In this calm and sequestered retreat, Mr. Lavers found solace to his mind, and new vigour to his frame; and here he laid the foundation of a society, in which the name of his kind hostess was one of the first enrolled.

When he opened his commission in that town, many flocked to hear him, several of whom appeared to be impressed with the importance of the message he delivered. These sought, by attending public worship, and meetings for Christian communion, to be more fully instructed in the things of God; so that it might be truly affirmed of them, that they "did many things, and heard him gladly." But from whatever cause it proceeded, the majority, in a short time, took a final leave both of the Preacher and of his ministry; whilst others, to the number of twenty, chiefly from the humbler stations in life, cleaved to him, and were formed into a society. There is, nevertheless, reason to conclude, that the saving truth

was fastened upon the minds of many who ceased to walk openly with him. One, in particular, who subsequently departed this life in the full assurance of faith, in his last hours spoke with grateful affection of the place, and of the people, amongst whom the Lord had graciously visited his soul.

Another sphere of usefulness was afforded him, for a time, by an individual who also opened his house for preaching, and who employed a number of young persons in his manufactory. The heads of this family, with some of their near relatives, and many of the young people, received him almost as an angel from heaven. Upon him devolved the conducting of their religious meeting, and they cordially acceded to his proposal of forming them into a class, and convening them for an hour, one evening in the week, to declare what God had done for their souls.

To thousands, "tied and bound with the chain of their sins," this mean of grace has proved the messenger of life and salvation; and, times without number, it has tuned to higher notes of praise the harps of those bright intelligences who rejoice in the conversion of a sinner.

One day he accompanied a friend to a house in the Mint, where divine service was held on the Sunday; when, commiserating the moral destitution of the surrounding population, he formed a plan for establishing a week-evening lecture, a measure which the Minister cordially approved and seconded. Mr. Lavers commenced this service by preaching to three or four persons. The compiler of these pages well remembers his returning from this labour of love, his eyes sparkling with joy, animated by the hope of seeing glorious days: meekly following the Great Exemplar, who, when the Samaritan woman formed the whole of his congregation, chose that occasion to declare to his disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Previously to this, the Mint had not proved unproductive; since sinners had there been cast into the Gospel mould, and were brought out bearing some impress of the image of Christ, with the superscription, "Holiness to the Lord." Two seals, at the least, have there been affixed to the efficacy of Mr. Lavers's ministry; one of them, a veteran in the army, notoriously addicted to habits of intemperance, and its concomitant train of vices; but both the one and the other were enlisted under the banner of Immanuel, and continue willing subjects of "the Prince of peace."*

The spiritual skill wherewith this subordinate physician was instructed, first to wound and then to heal the sin-sick soul, may be illustrated by his conduct to a lady, some part of his correspondence with whom will appear in the course of these pages. On their meeting at a party convened for serious conversation, his emaciated appearance excited her sympathy, whilst the distress of mind visible in her countenance, powerfully attracted his notice. On her narrating her experience to a friend in his hearing, he turned to her, and in an impressive manner said, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause," &c. (Micah vii. 9.) They separated, but he could not forget her. After a few days, he called upon her, in company with the lady at whose house they had met, and by some judicious questions, discovered more clearly her state and character. Before they parted, with much solemnity and feeling he thus addressed her:—"My dear Madam, as a servant of Christ, I feel bound by my office to tell you that you

* The place referred to having become too strait, and in other respects inconvenient, a large upper room has very lately been taken in the immediate neighbourhood, capable of containing about one hundred and fifty persons. And, in an upper room, the Lord Jesus still condescends to be present with his disciples, and "to make the place of his feet glorious."

are a sad backslider, and to call upon you in the language of St. John to the church of Ephesus, 'Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.' " For a time her state was more desolate than before; but this faithful friend, by conversation and by letter, proved instrumental in leading her to the blood of sprinkling for pardon: shortly afterwards she was made happy in the Lord, and useful to the church.

About this time, a lady to whom his ministrations had been blessed, writes as follows:—"I always received his letters at those seasons when I stood most in need of encouragement. He was truly an ambassador of Christ to me, and I shall always consider his friendship and counsel amongst the greatest mercies bestowed on me by my gracious God. There was something so truly apostolic in his conversation and deportment, and in the ardour of his zeal and love, that his presence never failed to produce in me solemn awe and veneration. I think it next to impossible for any one to have felt, still more to have manifested, a light or irreverent spirit where he was. He seemed at all times to say to those around him, 'Let us strive to draw each other into God.' His memory is blessed."

A young relative of this lady, who resided at a distance from London, in the order of Providence, paid her a visit; during which she was privileged to pass one evening in Mr. Lavers's society. That interview proved the foundation of a work of grace in her soul, and she has since found the blessing of reconciliation, through faith in the great atonement.

The circumstance is thus narrated by her own pen:—

"You tell me of the death of Mr. Lavers. I greatly enjoyed the evening spent in his company. Never till then did I feel my own worthlessness, and how unfit I was for such society, and yet I had never been so happy. If you remember, he particularly mentioned in his prayer the young, who were

not as yet converted ; and I think that there, *for the very first time*, I addressed a fervent prayer to God for mercy."

If the families with whom he resided during his visit to London, were asked to describe his character in one word, their answer would be—*spirituality* : and if to define his element, it would be—*devotion*. No light or trifling word fell from his lips, but his conversation was such as became the Gospel, and was calculated to excite those around him to glorify God, and to benefit mankind. The children and servants of the family always shared his affectionate solicitude, his counsel, and his prayers. The former naturally attached themselves to him, because they saw that he loved them, and felt interested in their welfare. He would sometimes express his regret that instances of entire union and unsullied domestic happiness were so rare, and that, comparatively, so few sedulously strove for the attainment of an object so well adapted to adorn the Gospel, and to afford its possessors a rich compensation. "True religion," says an old Divine, "never weakens the social affections, but refines and strengthens, by transplanting them from Egypt to Canaan." The silver link, the silken tie, that binds a family in hallowed fellowship and unreserved communion, is the true love of God and man.

" Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above ;
And he's an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love."

Mr. Lavers was wont to lay great stress on the duty of early imbuing the minds of children with divine truth, but still more, of alluring them by the exhibition of a bright and holy example. Children, he would say, must see a living Christ in their parents, if they would see Christ formed in the hearts of their offspring, "the hope of glory."

Bishop Jeremy Taylor has observed, "It is not only because the ground is accursed, but because it is neglected, that it bears thorns." If the frail bark puts to sea without either rudder or compass, is it strange that it should be shattered to pieces against the rocks, or engulfed in the whirlpool? No more can it be wondered at, that those children should sink into sin and perdition, who are embarked on the sea of temptation, without the guards of religious instruction and Christian example.

God has, in mercy, appointed means which, faithfully and diligently used, will produce, by his blessing upon them, certain desirable ends. Where Christian parents studiously inculcate on their children that which is right, and repress all that is wrong; where they strive to invest religion with its native loveliness, and to associate privilege with sacred duties, counting the Sabbath "a delight, holy to the Lord, honourable;" where they consecrate their offspring to the Lord, and act conformably, by subordinating every consideration to their spiritual welfare, the sure word of promise being *to us and to our children*, there the seed sown will be productive of a joyous harvest; for there "the Lord commandeth his blessing, even life for evermore."

For the servants, also, his heart glowed with lively interest; nor would he leave a family without inculcating upon them the necessity of obtaining deep personal piety, and of showing it by a uniform and cheerful obedience. Few heads of houses, in his estimation, adequately consulted the comfort of their households, or studied to render that service which is at the best a yoke, as easy as is consistent with the respect due to station, and the maintenance of proper authority. The want of kindness in manner, or of consideration in conduct; the few opportunities afforded them for pastoral instruction, or private meditation, with the absence of endeavour to render devotional services interesting to

them, on the part of many professing families, were causes of grief to his mind. And truly, where the primary object is needlessly to exact the utmost of their time and strength; where they are treated with chilling coldness, and required to frequent the family altar without one salutation in harmony with those of Boaz and his reapers; they may attend a routine of external service, and they may get orthodox views in their heads; but a true conversion of heart can scarcely be expected. It were wise in all heads of Christian families, to engage servants who would shape their conduct according to the Scriptures. The resolve of the royal Psalmist embraces both precept and example. "Mine eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they shall dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." Pliny records to the honour of Trajan, the Roman Emperor, that he selected, both for officers of state, and to wait upon his person, men of high probity and virtue. Doubtless, the early Christians, in selecting their servants, had especial reference to those of the household of faith. Happy they who have servants in whom their hearts can safely trust; who do good service as to the Lord rather than to men; whose example adorns and recommends the Gospel; and whose prayers draw down blessings both on the olive-trees, and on the branches round about their table. It is difficult to conceive how they who prefer not truly pious servants, still more how they who (other qualifications being equal) deliberately prefer such as make no profession, can lay claim to the character of one who behaves himself wisely in a perfect way, and who walks within his house with a perfect heart. (Psal. ci. 2, 6, 7.)

Amongst other essays to do good, one in which Mr. Lavers delighted was that of making presents of books, selected with particular reference to the age and experience of those for whom he designed them. In order to enjoy this luxury, with others of the like

nature, he increased his days of fasting, or of partial abstinence; and the writer once accidentally laid his hand on several volumes arranged for this benevolent purpose, when, in an ill state of health, he was about to walk several miles to the scene of labour, in order to save the expense of coach-hire. He felt that true charity dwells with self-denial; hence, he spent little that he might give much.

The cause of truth here calls for the humbling acknowledgment that the subject of this memoir was not proof against an enemy as subtle in its attacks as it is pernicious in its influence; and had cause to acknowledge with many that the song of the siren is more dangerous than the rock or the whirlpool. Changes of circumstances or station, especially those which tend to elevate, are seasons of Satan's sifting, and such Mr. Lavers found them. He had suddenly exchanged the vicissitudes and hardships of a Wesleyan Minister's life, in a country circuit, for a condition in which every want was anticipated, and many strove who should be the largest contributors to his comfort. Had they been uniformly actuated by a simple desire for profit, although they erred in judgment, the result would have been beneficial; but the simplicity and single eye which could alone secure the blessing, were marred by the unhallowed leaven which soon began to work.

Let a Minister be once clad in a coat of many colours, and let every sheaf bow to his sheaf, and we may rest assured that the pit is not far distant. Thus it proved in the case of Mr. Lavers. They imitated the conduct of the multitude towards our Lord; since, not succeeding in their endeavour to take him by force, and make him their King, they quickly elevated him to a pinnacle of their temple, whence they as suddenly cast him down, both by deserting his ministry, and by peremptorily excluding him from some fields of usefulness to which they had importunately invited him.

This disclosure of a scene, in which, if the curtain were drawn up, multitudes would appear performing daily, may serve to deter females professing godliness, from offering adulatory incense, or paying too strongly marked attentions to young Ministers. By such inconsiderate and unchristian conduct, they often prove instruments in Satan's hand to rob them of their graces, and puff them up with spiritual pride; whilst they seldom fail to visit upon the heads of their former favourites all the consequences of their own folly and indiscretion.

His medical advisers having recommended Mr. Lavers to try the effect of his native air, as the most likely mean of promoting his recovery; leaving Denmark-Hill early in February, 1829, he set sail for Dartmouth, and directed his steps to his native village, once more to embrace his aged parents, and to implore the blessing of God upon them. A brief record found amongst his papers shows the state of his mind at that time.

"Blackauton, 1829.—Hitherto the Lord hath helped me! Yesterday I solemnly renewed my covenant engagement with God. I might have been more usefully employed in the Lord's service, but my body is weak and exhausted, and our God is merciful. He pities me, embraces me in the arms of his love, and I feel that I am fully his."

In this salubrious atmosphere, he soon began to recover his health, which might probably have been restored, had he allowed himself that rest which had been recommended as essential to its attainment. A little incident may serve to show how difficult it was for his ardent spirit to consult the capability of its frail and debilitated companion. Shortly after his arrival at Blackauton, a friend came over from Dartmouth to see him. Inquiries were made for him, but in vain: he was nowhere to be found. On his return home in the evening, his friend passed by the chapel; and seeing the

door open, stepped in, when he soon discovered Mr. Lavers, seated in one of the pews, surrounded by several farmers' boys, with whom he had been praying, and talking of the things of God. Notwithstanding the caution he had received not to engage in public, before he had passed a month at Blackauton he began to preach. A spirit of curiosity, or that innate principle which so connects us with our countrymen, as to elevate us when they are honoured, and depress us when they are disgraced, induced numbers to attend whenever he preached, and caused his society to be sought after, insomuch that he began to fear the woe denounced by the Saviour on his disciples, when all men should speak well of them. But his popularity was short-lived; for invidious reports were soon raised to his prejudice, which were industriously circulated to the disparagement of his usefulness. It appears that he had visited a hardened sinner, in the last stage of a decline, who, on being told of his awful condition and the misery that awaited him unless he repented and experienced a new birth, became greatly distressed and agitated in mind; and, dying shortly after, a report was spread that Mr. Lavers's officious zeal had hastened his death. To some characters of that description he was nevertheless rendered useful; since out of a class which he had formed, most of them were truly awakened and seeking salvation, several of whom had been notorious transgressors.

With a view to the re-establishment of his health, and in the anticipation of resuming his beloved employ at the approaching Conference, in the month of June Mr. Lavers made a tour in Cornwall, from which, by the blessing of God, he found great benefit, and returned home with a considerable measure of his former health and vigour. These he was soon required, in the order of Providence, to consecrate to the service of the sanctuary. Owing to the sudden illness of one of the Ministers,

whereby he was wholly laid aside, Mr. Lavers, at the request of the Superintendent, entered on the full discharge of the ministerial office. He found his delight in the work, and his reward in the gracious presence and favour of his Divine Master. In several parts of the circuit, but especially in his native village, a growing disposition to attend the public ordinances was apparent, and a greater measure of the spirit of prayer in exercise. Several of the young converts afforded him ground for encouraging hope, and animated him to further endeavours in the culture of that moral desert. Impelled by an anxious desire of suiting the cases of the people, "that by all means he might save some," he instituted meetings of social communion, to which he invited Christians of various denominations; and there is reason to believe, notwithstanding the opposition he had to encounter, that permanent and spiritual good was effected through that instrumentality.

A few extracts from numerous tributes to Mr. Lavers's zeal and devotedness at this time will be appreciated, because borne by those who had been long and intimately acquainted with him.

A leading member of the Dartmouth society, speaking of his matured experience and growth in spiritual knowledge, emphatically remarks, "The language both of his heart and of his lips remained unchanged, for he always breathed the spirit of his Divine Master."

Another friend and office-bearer writes much to the same purport:—"To do good, and to communicate, was his great delight, and he was incessantly engaged in the Lord's service. The grace of humility shone with mild lustre in his whole deportment, and he was always ready to prefer others to himself. His sympathizing spirit eminently qualified him to apply the balm of consolation to the afflicted mind. When he conferred an obligation, and here I speak from experience, he was accustomed to express himself as though he were the party obliged.

On the subject of his eminence in piety, there can be but one judgment formed by all who had opportunity of witnessing his whole course of conduct: and I believe I am far from singular in the opinion, that if the Rev. John Fletcher ever had his like, that man was Mr. Lavers. Holiness to the Lord was his chief topic in the society of believers; it seemed as if his heart was filled with it; and his uniform endeavour was to draw others into the same intimate and transforming union and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Should the introduction of these and similar testimonies induce a charge of dealing in unqualified panegyric, the answer is, that a man's internal as well as his external history, the history of his mind, may be most fully learned from the independent yet concurrent evidence of competent witnesses, through the various stages of his Christian pilgrimage.

Thus it is profitable to trace, in the recorded experience of the subject of these pages, an increase of divine light, without the loss of the first love; to see that rare sight, a Christian "rejoicing in that he is made low;" to watch the process of sanctified affliction working an increased sympathy and tenderness towards fellow-sufferers; with the effect produced by the exhibition of eminent and uniform spirituality, as a savour of life or of death, to all on whom it shines. It was both gratifying to his feelings, and a proof of the estimation in which he was held, that Mr. Lavers received invitations from three different circuits to serve them in the Gospel at the ensuing Conference. It also gave evidence, although his physical strength was doubtless abated, that he had, in some good measure, performed amongst them the duties of a Minister of Christ. At the close of the sittings of Conference, Mr. Lavers's state of health was reported to be such as precluded his resuming the arduous labours of the itinerant ministry, at least for the present. To a friend who was present when Mr. Lavers

received the intelligence, he calmly observed, "I can live on the providence of my God." In a letter to the compiler, written at the same time, he expresses himself thus:—"I rejoice that the Lord, who is my portion, will fix the bounds of my habitation. Let him appoint me a sphere of labour and a state of trial in his blessed service, or take me to himself in glory: his will is my heaven. I bless him for all things, and not the least for sanctified trials." Thus brightly shone the graces of resignation and faith amidst the gloom of hope deferred and prospects blighted.

The following letters, written by Mr. Lavers about this period, exhibit his habitual state of mind, and his ardent desire to promote the spiritual welfare of those with whom he sustained the intercourse of social life.

To Mrs. Hall.

Elm Cottage, Norwood, Jan. 19th, 1829.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I TRUST we have come to the resolution to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified! We can prove our saving interest in his atoning sacrifice only by drinking into the same spirit, and so living to him as to die to all beside. As Christians, we profess to desire heaven; but it is well to bear in mind that the heaven of the believer consists in state as well as place. The ultimate glory, or future heaven, is a prepared place for a prepared people. It was typified by Solomon's temple, all the stones of which were hewn, and squared, and polished in Lebanon, fitted for the temple before they were brought thither; for "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool heard in the house." (1 Kings vi. 7.) Now, "Ye," says the Apostle to the church at Corinth, "are God's building." Again, writing to the Ephesians, he declares that saints are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and

without blame before him in love." (Eph. i. 4.) This is indeed a high view and a blessed election. I feel that I need constant prayer and watchfulness, lest my footsteps should slip, and I should bring dishonour upon that sacred name by which I am called. I entreat an interest in your prayers, whilst I assure you that your growth in grace and your eternal salvation are subjects which lie near my heart.

The Doctor's painful affliction may subject him to peculiar danger from despondency, and he may be tempted to inquire, How can these things be? This state of salvation is indeed desirable, but is it possible to attain it? Tell him that Jordan still flows, and that in it every believing, sin-sick soul may wash and be clean. If your judgment is convinced of this, let me entreat you not to bury your talent in the earth, but embrace the soul-enlivening truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Seek then, I beseech you, to live in the enjoyment of the blessing, and thus to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer.

I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged servant in Christ,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To M. Kinsey, Esq.

Elm Cottage, Norwood, Jan. 25th, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,

ALLOW me the privilege of uttering the fulness of my heart, by testifying that our gracious God is drawing me very sensibly and powerfully into the bond of the covenant. Intimate union with Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, brings unspeakable sweetness and joy into the soul. I have been for some hours quite overpowered, sweetly filled and lost in God; the Almighty is now holding me altogether to himself and for himself. I am constrained to cry out, "O the grace! What shall I

render?" The Lord Jesus causes me to feel all the truth and force of that sacred promise, "If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

I am the more inclined to address you, from having had an uncommon degree of power and assurance given me in praying for you. Indeed you appeared as though intimately near, and engaged with me, in a supplicating posture, earnestly seeking all the will of God; all the truth, grace, and power of his Christ. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." I feel most sensibly his constancy of love; he follows hard after those who yet see him not, neither know him. How does he pity their helpless unbelief, being touched with the feeling of our infirmities, although he is exalted to the highest glory! Omnipotent love is engaged, during all the years of our perverse rebellion and legal sufficiency, to humble us and lay us low. Thus saith the Lord, "Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high." But soon as we are down in lowliness of mind, and the Babel within is destroyed, he comes, and by the whisper of his Spirit speaks peace to the contrite mourner, and raises him to his glorious high throne as the place of his sanctuary. "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person." (Job xxii. 29.) How few, alas! have simple faith for a present salvation! Let us look to Jesus, who, by one sovereign act upon the stubborn heart, can "make it soft, and make it new." When I took up my pen, language failed to express my gratitude for the grace and glory which then filled, and still possess my soul. Unworthiness would impose silence, for I am more mean and worthless than any sinner saved by grace; but I mention it, in order that I may invite and entreat you to partake of my joy; at least to try the spirit, whether it be of God. When you last called here,

you appeared to labour under dejection. What meaneth it? Wherefore is it that those who love one another cannot yet divide the spiritual spoil, and, in the triumph of faith, turn the battle to the gate?

Pardon me, my dear friend, if I have ever appeared over-zealous for doctrines, to the grief of your spirit. My anxious desire and study was to speak faithfully, fully, and affectionately, once for all, of that truth which appears in my eyes of infinite moment, being dearer than life itself. But the power, and for the most part the wish, to engage in disputation was wisely taken from me, in order to keep me low and teachable; a state which finds refuge beneath the cross, even when compelled to cry, "Lord, who can tell how oft he offendeth?"

O pray fervently for me, as I do more than ever for you, lest Satan gain more advantage; for we ought not, after all our mental travail, to be ignorant of his devices. For some time, even in the midst of the kindest friends and a profusion of blessings, my spirit had been as it were shut up, although cleaving to the Lord; but I have lately been much more amongst the spiritually hungry and destitute, and now the glory is come.

Tell — and — that God is love. With affectionate remembrance to Mrs. K.,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Inseparably yours in Jesus,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Editor.

Blackauton, April 7th, 1829.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

THE affecting intelligence you have just communicated has excited my warmest sympathy, and caused much solemn reflection in my mind relative to the invisible world. I felt deeply impressed with the importance

of being also ready to attend the Bridegroom's call, and join the happy spirits now before the throne. Glory be to our God, we sorrow not as those who are strangers to the Gospel hope. Believing as we do that Jesus died for our offences, we are assured that those that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him; for where our exalted Head is, there shall all the members be.

How mysterious is that providence which, at so early a period, has removed dear little Henry Venn. Many times of late have I been led to turn to his much-loved name, as it stands in the Bible written by your pen; and reference to it has proved a short and pleasing way of bringing the whole family as it were before me. The name, as it met my view, has often called forth earnest prayer on his behalf; though I little expected his infant spirit would so soon return to his Father and his God, who, even in this affecting dispensation, proved how much he loved him. Yes, the promise of all good is to you and to your children; and we are called upon to praise the Lord who giveth the victory even to feeble infancy, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Surely our gracious God saw some evil impending, some gathering storm, that would have burst with relentless fury upon his defenceless head: for in the present state how many calamities may happen from which no advantages of station can give security!

Henry Venn is not, because God took him: the tender plant, secured from the chilling blasts of this tempestuous world, now flourishes in the paradise above. There,

“ No slightest touch of pain,
Or sorrow's least alloy,
Shall violate his rest, or stain
His purity of joy.”

This solemn event, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, may tend greatly to promote the life of faith in dear Mrs. E. and yourself. How consolatory the words

of Scripture, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Human sorrow is but for a moment; we shall soon rejoin those we have loved on earth, and death will be swallowed up in victory. Let us ever remember that "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Your letter gave me great encouragement. I feel more than ever the value of those who strive, with holy zeal, to draw me more closely into the bond of the covenant. How good is it for brethren thus to dwell together in unity!

That you may be comforted under every trial, and amidst all the storms of life rest with unshaken confidence on the Rock of ages, is the earnest prayer of

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Mrs. Wilkinson.

Blackauton, April 10th, 1829

MY DEAR MADAM,

You will not, I feel assured, construe my long silence into neglect. In taking possession of my new dwelling I have met with many difficulties. The hearts of my once alienated parents, however, are now changed towards me; they received me with the greatest affection, and they anticipate that my residence among them may prove a blessing. How much need is there for watchful solicitude on behalf of those who profess the religion of Jesus. What self-love, party-spirit, and lukewarmness exist amongst them. If none are the flock of Christ but those who follow him fully, then it must, I fear, be still called a little flock. My constant prayer for you is, that the Lord Jesus may draw you into a state of abiding communion with himself, display to you the glories of his grace, and quicken the powers of your

drooping spirit. Are the mists of unbelief yet scattered? Can you now say, "The Lord is my portion; I will trust, and not be afraid?" You must calculate on meeting with opposition; no great work was ever accomplished in the soul without it; indeed you must expect it as long as you proclaim war against sin and self. Live much in prayer, and in the divine strength you will be enabled to overcome all your foes. I felt deeply at being so suddenly prohibited meeting the little circle at —; but I cease not to pray for them. If they have forsaken the right way, it is a mercy to feel clear of their blood. Surely it is no trivial error to wrest Scripture to their own fancies, representing justification and sanctification as one and the same blessing. But it is still more derogatory to the glory of Immanuel to affirm that believers can be like Christ in the essential perfections of his human nature. I would oppose an angel from heaven were he to assert such errors. I aroused the indignation of the party by dissuading Miss — from such Christ-dishonouring views. It is my earnest prayer that, in the midst of every danger, you may stand with unwavering resolution, and that you may be kept steadfast until the day of Christ.

I am, dear Madam,

Your affectionate friend,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

Every church may find, in the following pastoral address, something for edification, especially such as are in danger of imbibing the spirit of the church at Laodicea:—

To the Wesleyan Methodist Society at Norwood.

BRETHREN, BELOVED IN THE LORD,

GRACE, mercy, and peace, be multiplied unto you. Ye who have received Jesus Christ the Lord, cleave unto him with purpose of heart, and see that ye walk in

him by faith, with humility and grateful love. Cultivate a spirit of unity and fidelity one towards the other : remember that Christ, the head, is not separated from his living members ; if, therefore, you are unstable in maintaining your Christian fellowship, you are departing in heart from Him on whom all your hope of heaven depends. When I first ministered to you in holy things, did ye not take Christ's yoke upon you cheerfully, and with a willing mind ? Did ye not resolve, whilst ye surrounded the table of your Lord, to live for God and for one another ? His vows are upon you : let there be a performance of that which you have promised. Could I take the wings of the morning, I would soon be present with you, once more to tell you, " God is love ;" that Jesus is a Saviour to the uttermost ; and that if you continue unanimous and importunate in prayer, " He will cast out your enemy," and " bruise Satan under your feet shortly." You are united in one body, in order that Christ, the hope of glory, may appear to the salvation of each member. The great end to be kept in view is, that the body of sin be destroyed, in order that you may rise up in newness of life, and walk even as Christ walked. Strive together, therefore, for this invaluable blessing. If you seek each other's edification, and bear one another's burdens without fainting, " The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple," and you shall doubtless " receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Will you suffer any one amongst you to become a prey to Satan and the world, through your want of sympathy and fidelity, or shall a weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ? It may be that you have already forsaken the assembling yourselves together, discouraged your Leader, lost some of your number, and strengthened the hands of such as oppose your progress to the rest of perfect love. And will you then allow a scoffing world and lukewarm professors to witness your downfall, and ex-

ultimately exclaim, "Aha! so we would have it!" If this be unhappily the case, then you have sinned against God, and I solemnly warn you to repent, and do the first works. Flee again to the Saviour, and lie in the dust before him until he restore you; and rest not till the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy is firmly fixed within. I have you in my heart to pray for you both day and night, but I have a godly jealousy as to some of you, lest you should be turned aside, and our labour prove in vain. I beseech you, therefore, "to obey them that are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;" and suffer them not to go mourning on account of your carnality or inconsistency. I trust brother C. still continues amongst you, alive to God and to your welfare. He has taken many wearying journeys on your account; and will you grieve him by absenting yourselves when he comes to serve you? When I had the privilege of being with you, your class-meetings were well attended. If you love me in the Lord, as I love you, then fulfil my joy by going forward. They who think themselves safe for eternity, although they are not diligent in the use of appointed means, are ignorant of the scriptural doctrine of security. Christ will never leave the two or three who meet together in his name, and wait upon him in his ways; but if we leave them from caprice, or from any cause save necessity, we virtually leave Christ.

My path has lately been through trials and afflictions: faith and hope have been put to the test: still I find the grace of Christ sufficient. I greatly need and earnestly entreat an interest in your prayers; but if you are half-hearted and lukewarm in religion, you will add sorrow to my sorrow. Rather, dear brethren, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." While others are disputing about it, seek to have the blessing of Gospel election fixed in your hearts. All who possess it, enjoy the forgiveness of their sins, and are made

partakers of a divine nature: the Holy Spirit witnesses their adoption; they receive the earnest of the inheritance, and abound in the fruits of righteousness.

Guard against light and trifling conversation, and all conformity to this vain world, by which so many have been beguiled to their destruction. Let grace reign in all your tempers, words, and actions. Remember, "Ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I am, dear brethren,

Yours in the best bonds,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

Blackauton, Sept. 29th, 1829.

To Mr. John Shaw.

Ottery St. Mary's, Dec. 1st, 1829.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR favour of the 26th, with its enclosure, arrived safely.* Accept my acknowledgments for your great kindness, and oblige me by personally thanking the esteemed brethren who contributed on my behalf, not omitting the two or three young friends who have modestly left me to guess their names. My friends have been too liberal.

"I blush in all things to abound,
The servant is above his Lord."

As I repeated these lines, a thought crossed my mind, whether any of his servants ever made so large an offering, at one time, to the Lord of all, in the days of his humiliation. My prayer to God for them is, that he may richly reward them into their own bosoms, that, continuing faithful, they may find godliness profitable

* The letter enclosed a £10 Bank-note.

for both worlds, and that their names may stand in the book of life for ever. Being engaged to write to brother Osborn, I shall embrace that opportunity of making some communications which will prove interesting to you both.

I am,
Your obliged and affectionate brother,
WILLIAM LAVERS.

Extract of a Letter to the Editor.

Blackauton, Dec. 12th, 1829.

WHILST I have cause to be thankful for some good measure of health, I cannot say that I possess the same vigour of constitution as when I first entered on the ministry. Besides this, definite arrangements had been entered into with Sir John Kennaway and the society at Ottery, before I was favoured with the President's communication. They have arranged a stipend, and suitable lodgings are engaged. The air of Ottery seems to agree with me, and it is considered likely to be conducive to my health. It is also a consideration, that I am not under an engagement to labour in more than one place. I am, therefore, disposed to think that I should scarcely be justified in declining my engagement; and might it not be tempting Providence to look, at least for the present, beyond the path so opportunely and plainly marked out for me?

I trust that this letter will be the last on the subject of my prospects or appointments, for I long to commune with you on the deep things of God. I live by faith; my hope abounds; and the Saviour is loved with a supreme affection. It cannot, then, be difficult to trust him for water in the wilderness, or manna in the desert. Let us strive to live constantly to the Lord, and die to the world, to sin, and self; so we shall be prepared to die in the Lord, whenever the glad summons shall arrive.

Are private, family, and social means frequent and blessed? Are you a home Missionary, and do you seek out new spheres of action? We should never rest whilst so many spots around us are dry and barren for want of spiritual culture. Let us sow and water, and "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Are you taking root downward, growing upward, and journeying heavenward? I long again to talk with the dear young ones of their souls and eternity.

I remain,

Your obliged and attached friend,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Lavers's appointment to Ottery St. Mary's, near Exeter.—His efforts for the revival of the cause at Honiton—His marriage, and subsequent removal to Ottery.—Extracts from his Correspondence.

FAINT and imperfect as is the view which the Christian takes of that gracious Providence which overrules all events to the accomplishment of the designs of infinite love and mercy, yet so sweet and excellent is it, that it has been denominated, with Jacob's Bethel, "the gate of heaven." The admirable and efficacious influence of Divine Providence is observable in ordering and controlling all the combinations of persons and things, both for the increase and establishment of Christ's church, and for the protection and benefit of his people. The later scenes of Mr. Lavers's life will be found to confirm this doctrine. Notwithstanding his condition, for a season, bore some resemblance to that of the Patriarch, when he exclaimed, in the agony of his spirit, "All these things are against me;" we shall shortly behold him erecting anew his Ebenezer, and adopting the motto of the Father of the faithful, "In the mount, the Lord will provide." The afflictions through which he passed proved subservient to the trial and improvement of his graces, and preparatives for the duties which still remained for him to perform. Happy they who, following in the steps of their Divine Master, "learn obedience by the things which they suffer." We shall also recognise this Divine Providence following as well as preceding him, like a stream that never dries up, and supplying him with all things pertaining both to life and godliness, until he reached the shores of the heavenly Canaan.

Mr. Lavers continued in the Dartmouth circuit till the close of the year 1829, when the cloud, on which his eye had been intently fixed, was taken up, and directed him to a new sphere of duty, and to a place of rest.

It appears that about this time Sir John Kennaway, of Escot Lodge, solicitous for the spiritual welfare of those who inhabited the soil of his earthly heritage, had just carried into effect a plan for affording to the inhabitants of Ottery St. Mary's an increased facility for attending the public ordinances. Under his auspices, and with the aid of others who had been stirred up by his example, a convenient place of worship had been erected ; and, anxious to combine the advantage of pastoral oversight with the public ministry, he had proffered a certain quota towards the maintenance of a resident Minister. In consequence of the inquiries which he instituted for a suitable Pastor to dwell amongst them, and visit the flock from house to house, a gentleman living at Exeter recommended Mr. Lavers, as being eminently qualified for the charge. He was consequently invited to wait upon the Baronet, in order to confer with him, in company with the Superintendent, upon the subject. From Sir John he experienced the most cordial reception, with expressions of the liveliest interest in the success of his projected labours, and before they parted, it was further evidenced by his offering to double his annual subscription. By mutual consent, the chapel was settled upon the Conference plan ; and, the Superintendent and Stewards fully acquiescing in the measure, Mr. Lavers engaged to serve them in the Gospel, and to be with them at the opening of the chapel. He continued there, however, for a short season, preached to large and attentive congregations, met the society, and had the satisfaction of giving some notes on trial.

Ottery St. Mary's is an ancient market-town, situated twelve miles from Exeter, south of the great London road, containing a population of four thousand persons,

for the most part in humble circumstances, and very inadequately supplied with the means of grace.

Since conduct affords the most unequivocal test of sentiment, it may be inferred that the patron of this rising interest deemed a Methodist ministry peculiarly calculated to benefit the inhabitants of Ottery, and both a suitable and efficient coadjutor to the Established Church, of which he was a member. Christians cannot but hail every successive evidence of this catholic spirit, as indicative of the nearer approach of that period when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

Having referred to the active agency, it may prove an encouragement and excitation to duty, briefly to notice the secret spring to which we may trace the Gospel stream which Providence directed into this parched and sterile field. We read in Acts xvi. that St. Paul was warned by a vision to preach the Gospel in Macedonia, and that Philippi was the first city in which he opened his commission. The introduction of the Gospel into Europe in so marvellous a manner, presents, at first sight, an aspect of exclusive sovereignty; but we learn from the context, that these zealous Ministers went out on the Sabbath-day to the river side, "where prayer was wont to be made," and talked to the women that resorted thither. Theirs was the prayer of faith, and hence its prevalency. Now there was a church of Christ in Escot Lodge, who, with others, were earnest in supplication for the prosperity of Zion; and assuredly wherever prayer is wont to be made, and where our Lydias who worship God associate for that object, there the Great Head of the Church will send "Pastors after his own heart," there sinners shall be converted to him, and his saints be fed with knowledge and understanding.

We have only to follow the track of this servant of Christ, to discover that, in the prospect of a home appointment, he had not forgotten that there were sheep

in other folds, which needed a shepherd's care. During his visit to Ottery, mention was made of Honiton, situated five miles distant, on the London road; a comparatively neglected town, although not destitute of a Gospel ministry. On visiting a friend who lived in its immediate vicinity, Mr. Lavers's inquiries were not directed to the picturesque scenery which the sun, though hastening to the southern tropic, still gilded with his declining beams, but to the spiritual necessities of the inhabitants, and the best means of irradiating their minds with the far brighter beams of the Gospel light.

Through the kindness of the Minister, he obtained the use of the Baptist chapel, being that which originally belonged to the Methodists, and addressed a full congregation from Psal. xlix. 8, "The redemption of their soul is precious." He learned, on inquiry, that the Methodists had left Honiton some years, and disposed of their chapel, upon the principle adopted by the Wesleyan Connexion, not to retain a place of worship where they cannot keep up a society. He was grieved at heart by this intelligence, but it served only to rouse his energies to seek its restoration, and to extend to the inhabitants the advantage of a zealous and efficient ministry. Accordingly, he resolved on passing some days there, in the hope of gathering together the scattered members of the former society. Having made minute inquiries, he went through the town, seeking out such as retained the Christian profession, and succeeded in collecting fifteen persons, who had been members of society in brighter days. These he formed into a class, and met, from time to time, for exhortation and prayer, entreating them earnestly to cleave to the Lord, and to associate with each other for spiritual profit.* Mr. Lavers enjoyed some refreshing

* Felix Neff's farewell letter to his beloved Alpines, over whom he was Pastor, speaks so forcibly upon this subject, and is altogether

seasons in communion with these strangers of the dispersion, and his visit among them was hailed as a prelude to their rise and prosperity. Before he took his leave, they voluntarily engaged to procure a place, in which they might assemble, should he be permitted to visit them occasionally when settled at Ottery St. Mary's. On his return to Blackauton he was confined to the

so interesting a document, as to require no apology for its insertion :—

“ I exhort you most particularly not to neglect the assembling yourselves together. I do not refer to those assemblies only where one speaks and all the others listen ; these, doubtless, where the Gospel is faithfully preached, are so greatly blessed, and are such powerful means of awakening and confirming souls, that you ought not to require any admonition touching them. But this service is not enough for the Christian, nor is it that which is described and enjoined in those passages, 1 Cor. xii. 5—12, 22, 28 ; xiv. 23—27, 31. The assemblies of which I now speak are those where all may exhort, and where all are edified ; where each may communicate to his brethren his own sentiments, and the illumination and the grace which he has received from God : in a word, where each gives and takes, teaches and learns, in turn. These are the only assemblies which can strictly be called mutual ; it is here there is a communion between brethren, and that God has promised to give his blessing. (Psal. cxxxiii.) I repeat to you then, my dear friends, take care to encourage such assemblies amongst you, and let them consist severally, as far as they can, of every age and of each sex, that they may be more simple, more unreserved, and more confiding. He who goes to an assembly only when a stranger, or one of more than common eloquence, makes his appearance there, and who neglects the duty when none but the humble and the simple attend, cannot be said to be spiritually-minded. You would, indeed, be an assembly where the Lord would be in the midst of you, if each of you would bring with you a spirit of prayer and meditation ; and your assembly would be as abundantly blessed as that of the first disciples when they met together in an upper room, on the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and on that other day, when the Apostles returned from the Council, rejoicing that they had been permitted to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts iv.)”—*Memoir of Felix Neff, by W. S. Gilly, A.M.*

house by a violent cold which he caught upon his journey. On or about the 10th of January, 1830, being sufficiently recovered to travel, he bade farewell to his family and Christian friends, and directed his course to Honiton. It appears that the opening of Ottery chapel had been unavoidably postponed, and, until that period should arrive, Mr. Lavers had offered to minister gratuitously to the society which he had so recently been the instrument of raising. On his arrival, he found that the people had fulfilled their promise, having engaged a school-room for the purposes of public worship and Christian communion. In a letter to a friend in town, Mr. Lavers thus describes his proceedings and prospects :—

“ During the last fortnight, especially, the Lord has been displaying some tokens of his power and grace amongst us. Our new place of worship is crowded to excess, both on the Sabbath and the week-day evening. Seventeen members are already added to our society, and there are not less than thirty more ready to join. The class-meetings are well attended, and inquirers after the way of salvation are numerous. A power and unction from above evidently rests upon all our assemblies for prayer.”

Here Mr. Lavers continued for about three months, in unwearied exertions for the edification of the society, and the conversion of sinners ; in both of which he was favoured with satisfactory evidence that he had “ not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.” About the middle of March, the chapel at Ottery being completed, he removed thither to undertake a sphere of duty as congenial to his feelings and proportioned to his strength, as it was calculated to meet the spiritual wants of the people.

Whilst ministering in the Dover circuit, Mr. Lavers became acquainted with the lady to whom, at no very distant period, he was united in marriage. Under the

roof where she resided with her widowed mother, the Ministers had long received the most cordial welcome. Miss Godden, the lady referred to, was called to the knowledge of the truth under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Bartlett, Rector of the adjoining parish of Kingston; of whom, when recounting her early experience, she always speaks in terms of grateful remembrance. Soon after the introduction of Methodism into Barham, she was induced, from the report which reached her concerning it, and from the opposition it excited, to attend its services, which were found characterized by a faithful and heart-searching ministry, and hallowing seasons of Christian communion and fellowship. Mr. Lavers soon became attached to her, as one in whom he recognised a congenial spirit; but considering himself, as he subsequently declared, unworthy of such a boon, he endeavoured, by increased devotedness to his ministerial duties, to lose sight of every union save that to the Lord and to his people. Opportunities had presented themselves for his forming what the world would call a highly advantageous connexion; but his language to a friend who had previously advised him to marry, was, "The object of my choice must possess the mind that was in Christ;" observing, with the apostolic Fletcher, "She must be willing to marry the people and the cause of God in every circuit."

The following extract from a letter to Miss Godden evinces that a change had taken place in Mr. Lavers's mind, as to the expediency of entering upon a new and interesting relationship, though he varied not as to the object of his affection and choice:—

Honiton, Feb. 20th, 1830.

Your kind letter, every line of which is precious to me, arrived yesterday evening, a little before our prayer-meeting commenced. Accept my best thanks for what I must consider an early answer. Whilst it is

not all that ardent affection can desire, I feel happy that it does not deprive me of the hope of obtaining what I must ever consider my greatest earthly treasure. That one so favourably situated, and so usefully employed in her present sphere, should raise some objections, is far from causing me surprise; besides, when was any valuable object obtained without some difficulty? This life is a state of trial, and to a child of God every event may be rendered productive of some salutary lesson. When I first entreated you to consent to a union of heart and hand, I can truly say no sordid motive actuated me; for I loved you, even as Christ loved his church, although, I must confess, that my individual happiness was viewed in connexion with transplanting you into a soil where, if your labours are not more needful, they will be considerably extended, and, I trust, rendered far more efficient.

The marriage was solemnized at Barham church, on May 14th, 1830.

The following notice, communicated by a friend who was present on that occasion, may serve to throw some light on the meaning of the Apostle, when he sanctions marriage "only in the Lord:"—

"At Mr. Lavers's request, breakfast was ordered at an early hour, that more time might be devoted to reading the Scripture, and mutual prayer for the blessing of God on this ordinance of his appointment. These sacred exercises delightfully occupied the time till the party proceeded to the church. Immediately upon our return, Mr. Lavers called upon us to rejoice with him, and to unite in praising the Lord for his goodness. Having taken some refreshment, Mr. Lavers read and expounded a chapter. After this, the tribute of prayer and praise was again presented to the God of our mercies, and I was much impressed with the fervour and the suitableness of his petitions for each person present.

“It was a day begun, continued, and ended in the fear of the Lord; affording striking proof that the finest social feelings may be called into exercise, and the purest enjoyment realized, by a conscientious regard to the apostolic precept, ‘Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ I had previously known and esteemed Mr. Lavers, as a zealous and useful Minister; but to observe him, at such a season, most solicitous to spend every moment of the day in a manner well pleasing to God, and closing it with earnest entreaties that the Lord would pardon all that had been said or done inconsistent with his holy will, quoting that passage of the Psalmist, ‘Who can tell how often he offendeth?’ I must acknowledge, excited both my admiration and astonishment. Such spirituality of mind, with such tenderness of conscience, I never before witnessed.”

The ardour with which Mr. Lavers entered upon each successive sphere of duty, may account for the irregularity of his correspondence. He was wont to remark, that extraordinary exertions, accompanied by more frequent and importunate prayer, were peculiarly requisite on the first introduction of the Gospel amongst any people. For this necessity he assigned two reasons; first, seeing that the Lord’s time for favouring Zion was manifestly arrived, it was incumbent on his Ministers and his people that they should be, what the Apostle designates them, “co-workers together” *with Him*: and, secondly, the solemn consideration that many who have refused the first call, resisted the earlier strivings of the Spirit, and, like Felix, deferred repentance until a more convenient season, have thereby irretrievably lost the day of their gracious visitation, and have ultimately come short of eternal life.

• *To Mr. Udens, Lyminge.*

Barham, May 5th, 1830.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

YOU have long been convinced of the value of the soul, and having tasted that the Lord is gracious, have given yourself in covenant to the God of Jacob. Consider how justly Jesus claims you as his own : be it then your chief concern to follow him fully and boldly, taking up and firmly sustaining the cross : so shall you experience even here a little heaven of purity and love, with the anticipation of a never-fading crown.

You are very modest in the statement of your experience. Still there may be a culpable diffidence, which robs God of his glory, and the soul of its fruitfulness. I apprehend this to be "that withholding more than is meet, which tendeth only to poverty;" "whilst he that scattereth, increaseth." There can be no progress in sanctification, unless we enjoy a present pardon, with an assurance of our adoption into the family of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Before the latter blessing is realized, the conscience being defiled and laden with guilt, we can neither love God nor glorify him ; but the soul that is freely justified loves much, knowing it has had much forgiven. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ; for God is love." What a glorious theme ! Too high for the comprehension even of angelic intelligences ; and so vast, that it is commensurate with eternity. And yet, even here, we may expect so far to know it as to be "filled with all the fulness of God." Thus being justified freely, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, heaven descends to earth, and a voice is heard saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

You are blessed with a wife and children. Walk before your house with a perfect heart : let each strive to help the other forward by prayer and example, and evince a jealous, watchful care for the precious little immortals committed to your trust. Lead them to the feet of the Saviour, and leave them there in faith. If the Sun of Righteousness arise not on the horizon of the mind, what can be looked for but a cloudy time and a stormy eternity? On the other hand, remember, for your encouragement, the promise is to us and to our children. The God of truth has declared, "The generation of the upright shall be blessed." To that God I commend you, and to the word of his grace ; and remain,

My dear brother,

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

The following letter contains another pleasing reference to the cheerful sanctity of the wedding-day, and acquaints us with Mr. and Mrs. Lavers's arrival at Ottery St. Mary's.

Ottery St. Mary's, May 22d, 1830.

DEAR AND HONOURED PARENTS,

I GLADLY embrace the earliest opportunity to inform you of my welfare, and to call upon you to join with me in thanksgiving to the God of our mercies.

Although very weak when I left home, the Lord has blessed the journey to the improvement of my health. I arrived at Barham on the 1st of May ; and the delightful scenery which unfolded around me in all the beauty of the season, was in unison with my feelings, when I once more entered the dwelling I had often visited with delight, anticipating a union to be perfected hereafter in the paradise of God.

Having passed some sweet and profitable days in the society of my dearest Anna, we were solemnly united

to each other on the 14th instant. On that eminently joyful day several dear friends favoured us with their company: but that which crowned this opening scene of happiness was the spiritual presence of the Saviour, who once condescended to grace a marriage-feast in Galilee, and there to perform his first miracle. The day glided away, as free from gloom or dulness as from levity or excess; and whilst communing on heavenly things, we drank the new wine of the kingdom, and feasted together in holy fellowship. We left Barham for Canterbury, where we passed the Sabbath, and I preached. On Monday, we proceeded to Denmark-Hill, to visit our friends, left town for Devonshire on Thursday; and yesterday, by the good hand of our God upon us, we safely reached our habitation, which is now *a home indeed*. I trust my dear parents are under an increasing concern for the salvation of their never-dying souls. Alas! what will it avail us to have been the subjects of many mercies, and to have enjoyed many temporal blessings, if we fail to secure "a mansion in the skies;" and in order to this, we must have an interest in the Saviour of sinners. We often pray that our dear parents may flee to Jesus as their only hope, and find in him a present salvation, with a future and eternal rest in glory. It would be melancholy indeed to rest on a false hope. Let me, then, affectionately entreat you to seek Him who waits to "bless us, by turning away every one of us from our iniquities."

Pray write to me soon, as I long to know how you are. Let us study to redeem the time, rise by faith above the world, and stand prepared, since "in an hour that we think not of, the Son of man cometh." My Anna joins me in duty to you both, and love to the family circle.

I am, dear and honoured Parents,
Your dutiful Son,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Mr. John Shaw.

Ottery St. Mary's, Aug. 14th, 1830.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

My prayer for you is, that you may continue to walk in Christ, live constantly upon his fulness, imbibe more of his Spirit, and more closely copy his example; thus you will be confirmed in the full assurance of hope unto the end. Cultivate diligently that habitual seriousness which I have witnessed in you. How widely different is holy self-possession from the solemnity of the mere moralist. Whilst you cherish this spirit, the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will rise upon you, and the heavenly Comforter will be for ever with you.* I doubt not but you retain your love to the poor members of Christ, and your attachment to the sanctifying doctrines and edifying discipline of our favoured Connexion, both of which "are according to godliness." I hope also that you are sedulous in preparing for public duties, and solicitous in every possible way to serve your generation. You have but little leisure time, I know; yet be not discouraged on that account, since if your service is more arduous, yet cheerful, it will be the more acceptable; and remember, "To him that hath more shall be given." In all your duties, seek a present blessing to you own soul, and then wisdom to meet every case. Christ has ascended, and has received gifts for men. In order that Ministers may become productive of fruit that shall abide, the Holy Spirit must rest upon them as a Spirit of light, of life, and of power. This great gift is only received in the exercise of humble faith: let us, therefore, be very cautious lest

* "Recollection," writes the apostolic Fletcher, "is a castle, an inviolable fortress against the world and the devil: it renders all times and places alike, and it is the habitation where Christ and his bride dwell."

we grieve the Holy Spirit. Although I write thus, I have confidence in you in this matter. I would, however, exhort you to abound in the work of the Lord, without regarding human praise or censure, since if your sole object be to please God, he will bless you, and use you as a vessel for his service.

We are favoured with some spiritual prosperity. We hold five prayer-meetings in the week, and, what is better, the Lord has given us a band of praying people. Our adult school is very promising: my dear wife is indeed a help-meet, and finds strength for the work, and encouragement in it. We have also a prospect of usefulness in the surrounding villages. Encouraged by the liberality of our venerable patron, Honiton will doubtless rise; a large house has been purchased there, which is speedily to be converted into a commodious chapel.

I am, my dear Friend,

Yours inseparably,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Lavers ministers at Ottery St. Mary's.—Some remarkable seals to his labours.—He proves instrumental in obtaining a Chapel at Honiton.—His health declining, he removes to that town; and, after visiting Kent, settles at Honiton.—Extracts from his Correspondence.

WE have already referred to the peculiar circumstances of the people at Ottery, which induced Sir John Ken-
naway to suggest and patronise the locating of a resident Minister. The acting Trustee, together with the other officers of the society, conceiving that measure would prove the most efficient, sought out and applied to Mr. Lavers to undertake the office. It was not, however, until the full sanction of the Superintendent had been obtained, that he considered himself justified in accepting it. His first engagement was to labour at Ottery for a twelvemonth, although he was prevented by illness from completing his first year on that station.

Upon this new sphere of duty he entered with his wonted zeal and perseverance; nor were his efforts unaccompanied by the divine blessing. During the first quarter, above twenty were added to the society, and seven received notes on trial.

For the benefit of the adult population, Mr. Lavers promoted the formation of a female Bible class, which was well attended; and a class of young men was subsequently formed upon the same plan.

It has been truly affirmed of him, that he sought out the poor, but the rich sought him. In every sphere which he occupied, much of his time was engaged in visiting those in humble stations, and he delighted in

relieving their wants, sympathizing in their afflictions, and in pouring the oil of consolation into the wounded spirit.

The appointment of Mr. and Mrs. Lavers as almoners of Sir John and the Misses Kennaway, who considered the poor of Ottery as their peculiar charge, rendered that interesting duty doubly pleasant; as it enabled Mr. Lavers to raise the supply to the necessity, and spared him the bitter pangs he had formerly felt in witnessing an extent of suffering and privation which he was unable to relieve. And truly what he declared as to the spiritual state of the people, that it took hold of his heart as the fibres of the ivy entwine around the oak, was not inapplicable to their temporal condition.

He had soon the satisfaction of witnessing the chapel crowded with attentive hearers, and of observing, through the blessing of God upon the preached Gospel and pastoral visits, an increased tone of seriousness, and a greater regard to religious duties, diffused throughout that previously benighted neighbourhood. Of several members in his juvenile classes, he had ground to hope, they were the subjects of saving grace, whilst the walk and conversation of those whom he had proved the instrument of adding to the church, was calculated to rejoice his heart, and call forth ascriptions of praise to God.

But the most decided proof that the hand of the Lord was with him, appeared in the conversion of three females, one of whom had reached the grand climacteric, and another was seventy-eight years of age. These were all given him for his joy and crown in the course of a few months; the one last-mentioned, aged as she was, may be termed the first-fruits. From the time she began to attend his ministry, a decided change was visible in her conduct, and the heart that for more than threescore years had been hard as adamant, was melted into tenderness; and those eyes which had been roving after the world, would let fall bitter tears at the remem-

brance of her transgressions, and tears of joy and love to Him who had spared such a cumberer of the ground, and at the eleventh hour had given her a sweet assurance that she should be with him in paradise. Mr. Lavers visited her often, during her short but bright pilgrimage, encouraged and animated her with the precious promises of the Gospel, and at last witnessed her departure; when, with a hope full of immortality, she exclaimed, "Christ is precious, very precious to my soul!" About the same time, another aged disciple was arrested by the Spirit of God, under the preached word, and fleeing for refuge to the hope set before her, she soon found pardon and peace in believing. Hers was but a stammering tongue, and her body a tottering tabernacle; yet she waited not for the gift of tongues, or the miraculous healing power, but, weak as she was, went forth in the strength of the Lord, and occupied the remnant of her protracted life, in declaring to her poor neighbours "what Jesus had done for her, and how he had compassion on her."

We took a reluctant leave, in a former chapter, of the society at Honiton, left, when Mr. Lavers entered upon his duty at Ottery, as sheep having no shepherd. They had been long desirous of obtaining a suitable place for divine worship; when, at this juncture, a building, formerly used as an armoury, was most unexpectedly announced for sale. The purchase, it is true, was two hundred pounds, and another hundred was needed for alterations, and the society was poor. Still was that outlay trivial indeed, viewed as the price of converting a stronghold for the weapons of war into a temple for the Gospel of peace. At Mr. Lavers's solicitation, their liberal patron, Sir John Kennaway, kindly placed them in a position to effect their object. Thus encouraged, they immediately commenced the work; Mr. Lavers superintending the alterations with his accustomed zeal and vigour. The chapel thus providentially and oppor-

tunely raised, was opened the first week in November, 1830.

Although the effects of a temple erected to Jehovah, in a Christian country, are neither so sudden nor so palpable as when raised in a land of idols, where it imparts new courage to the soldiers of the cross, and "makes the diviners mad;" still the appearance of another elevated light in every benighted neighbourhood cannot but be hailed with joy by all who are interested in the prosperity of Zion. And in proportion as Christian discipline goes hand in hand with Christian instruction, will it prove, to those who embrace it, the power of God unto salvation. Hence Methodism avails itself of the sympathy and social feeling which constitute the law of the human mind, and by incorporating every member into a Christian society, cements the living stones together, that they may build up one another into an holy temple in the Lord. It acts upon the principle, that we cannot serve God alone; that to walk in the road to heaven, we must either find companions or make them; and that the Bible recognises no *solitary religion*. On their conscientious discharge of the reciprocal duties of Christian fellowship it depends, whether a professing church shall prove a rope of sand, which every ebb or flow of the tide dissolves, or "a threefold cord, which is not easily broken."

In the beginning of the year 1831, Mr. Lavers's health appeared to be rapidly declining. He nevertheless persevered in his public duties and pastoral visits, notwithstanding the apprehensions intimated by his friends, that unless he spared himself, he must anticipate the entire abandonment of the employ in which his soul both lived and flourished.

In the postscript of a letter, addressed by him to a friend at Denmark-Hill, dated January 13th, Mrs. Lavers thus expresses herself on this subject:—

"With respect to my dear husband, I have reason to

fear that his bodily indisposition increases ; and, unless the gracious Disposer of all events see fit to renew his strength, I think he will be obliged shortly to give up his charge. I cannot but feel the affliction keenly ; but I trust the language of my heart is, ‘ Thy will be done.’ Should he see fit to remove his dear servant from this field of labour, he will doubtless send others to supply his place, that the precious little flock may not be scattered.”

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The apprehensions which his affectionate partner had anticipated, proved but too accurately founded ; and it was considered advisable that he should try the effect of change of air, together with repose both of body and mind. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, he took a reluctant leave of the flock at Ottery, and removed to Honiton. After a residence of two months at this retreat, where he experienced rather a mitigation of symptoms than a favourable turn of the disorder, he was unexpectedly summoned to Dartmouth, by the distressing tidings that his aged mother was on the borders of the invisible world.

Impelled by filial affection, and animated by the hope that he might prove the favoured instrument of directing her, even at the eleventh hour, to that Saviour “ who abolished death,” and “ opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers,” he hastened to the house of mourning. But an infinitely wise though inscrutable Providence had otherwise determined : her days were numbered, and before her devoted son could once more point her to the open fountain, her earthly course was run, and her spirit had returned to God who gave it.

It is not permitted to mortals to draw aside the curtain which veils the spiritual world, or to discover those hidden things which, for wise purposes, are reserved for the judgment-day to disclose. It may, nevertheless, be profitable to remark, that of the saints whose lives are recorded in the annals of sacred history, we find com-

paratively few, when passed the meridian of life, made partakers of a new and divine nature. Rare are the instances of persons having been born again when they are old, departing hence with "a hope full of immortality:" but who must not fear for as many as, having squandered the spring and the autumn of life, recklessly defer their flight *unto its winter*.

During Mr. Lavers's stay at Dartmouth, he was seized with a violent attack of his disorder, from the effects of which he very gradually recovered. After a month passed amidst the scenes of his childhood and early ministerial labours, in the hope that the sea-breezes and the air of Kent might prove beneficial to his health; he proceeded with Mrs. Lavers to Torquay, then by sea to Portsmouth, and from thence through London to Barham, Mr. Lavers having experienced decided benefit from the excursion.

Although his physical strength limited his services to visiting the society and the poor, with occasional exhortations, his enfeebled frame and sickly countenance, still lighted up by that love of souls which secretly consumed him, preached to many hearts. A lady, to whom he had been made a blessing, remarked, that the very sight of him upbraided her with a view of her own unfaithfulness. "That health and strength," she added, "were long and prodigally spent for me, without effect; and whilst I have but unduly requited his labours of love; upon many of us, I fear, they have been wholly thrown away." So true is that sentiment of the poet:—

" Not to understand a jewel's worth,
Till heaven has stole away the slighted gem,
Is cause of half the misery we feel,
And makes the world the wilderness it is."

Mr. Lavers passed two months at Barham, under the hospitable roof where he had formerly received a cordial welcome as an ambassador of Christ. Here, through

the kind attention of its beloved inmates, the salubrity of the air, and comparative repose, he gradually recovered a tone of health and vigour to which he had long been a stranger.

From this retreat, justly endeared to him by numerous ties, he was summoned by the earnest solicitation of the Trustees and members of the Honiton society. Mr. Lavers thus refers to the circumstance in a letter to a friend :—

“After much consideration and prayer, I have accepted an invitation to supply the chapel at Honiton. There was no society there when I was providentially led to visit the neighbourhood. By the blessing of God on that humble instrumentality, a society was formed and kept together, and means obtained for the erection of a chapel. I shall be satisfied with whatever modicum the society can afford to raise ; and, if my circumstances allowed of it, most gladly would I minister to them gratuitously.”

In their route, which lay through London, Mr. and Mrs. Lavers passed a few days with their friends at Denmark-Hill. But the delight which this interview afforded them was mingled with deep regret by marking the ravages of disease on a frame of no ordinary mould, once remarkable for vigorous exertion ; whilst sympathy for his dear partner, who, they feared, would soon be called to bid adieu to so invaluable a companion and guide, threw a darker cloud over the sunshine of their joy.

But a few short years had passed, and with Mr. Lavers the sun had never seemed to pace slowly ; for the service of the Lord was freedom, and labour his delight. Sickness had indeed somewhat repressed the elasticity of his spirits, and limited his efforts for usefulness, but his zeal for the cause of God and the salvation of souls, like waters forcibly compressed, rose more suddenly and strongly toward heaven. During his visit, he was pecu-

liarly intent on redeeming the time for spiritual conversation or for devotional exercises; and that he succeeded in the endeavour, may be inferred from the impartial testimony of a young Minister who was invited to meet him. Being asked by a friend what he thought would be the consequence if all Christians were such in spirit and conversation as the one he had lately seen, he replied, "They who witness such evidences of the power of godliness must either fall before it, and say, 'We will go with you, for we perceive of a truth that God is with you;' or they must shun their company as an intolerable burden."

The societies to whom during his former visit he had ministered the word of life, and the friends with whom he had met for spiritual profit, were evidently laid upon his heart; and he had little rest in spirit until he had visited them, and endeavoured to encourage and urge them onward in their heavenly course: one of the first places to which he repaired being Norwood, the scene of his former labours.

His visits proved the means, in the hand of the Lord, of stirring up many; and some souls, quickened by the good seed then sown in much bodily weakness, will prove to have been the first-fruits of many sheaves which he shall hereafter gather in the heavenly harvest.

Mr. and Mrs. Lavers having taken an affectionate leave of their friends, left town for Honiton, July 26th, to take charge of the flock which, as an under shepherd, he had gathered into the Gospel fold.

The remainder of this chapter will be found to consist of extracts from Mr. Lavers's correspondence, enlarged as it became from intercourse with the select Christian society he was privileged to meet at Escot Lodge. Therein may be traced an increased sensibility and livelier sympathy, both in the joys and the sorrows of the household of faith, especially as a son of con-

solation, to speak a word in season to them that are weary.

As his earlier course was marked by decision and active exertion in the cause of Christ, although his desires and prayers were not less fervent, nor his talents less consecrated, his chief progress will appear in those passive graces which are both elicited and strengthened in the school of affliction.

We may also recognise the workings of a mind deeply imbued with the important truth, that so much as we have obtained of the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, so much do we possess of true and vital godliness.

One other feature there is, so lovely and so prominent, that it can scarcely fail to be observed, even in a cursory perusal. It is that the name and offices of our adorable Immanuel constitute the pre-eminent exhaustless theme on which he delights to dwell, and that as he approaches nearer to the land that is afar off, and is "looking for and hasting to the coming of the day" when he shall "see the King in his beauty," the savour of the knowledge of his grace and of his glory proves "as ointment poured forth," like the perfumes of Arabia Felix, which exhale their odours throughout the neighbouring provinces. Yes, his harp is divinely strung, and every chord is strained to celebrate "the chiefest amongst ten thousand, and the altogether lovely;" nor will one string be found loosened, nor the hand once wearied or hung down, until death suspend the harmony for a moment, instantly to break forth in loftier, nobler, and eternal strains.

To Mrs. Wilkinson.

Ottery St. Mary's, June 23d, 1830.

MY DEAR MADAM,

A VARIETY of engagements has hitherto prevented my writing: yet I can assure you both my Anna and

myself constantly remember you at a throne of grace, and I doubt not but you also bear us on your heart when you visit the mercy-seat. I have frequently observed that those who have shown kindness to the suffering members of Christ's family on earth, from a principle of love to him, have been rewarded, even here, sevenfold into their own bosoms. Wait patiently on the Lord, and you shall find that "He is not unmindful to forget your work and labour of love." Let your heart be established, and resolve to hope in God, knowing that you "shall yet praise him who is the health of your countenance, and your God." Yea, you shall continue your song of praise,—

"While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures."

We count them happy that endure. Should your way not yet be made plain, still believe; fear not, but look through every gathering cloud, till you see the bow appear. Sing with your whole heart that sweet hymn,—

"Cast on the fidelity
Of my redeeming Lord,
I shall his salvation see,
According to his word."

You must honour the Lord with your confidence, as well as with your substance. Consider what the Apostle James says, "Take, my brethren, the Prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience." Then plead this promise for consolation under trial, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." Above all, keep constantly in view the precious assurance, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." You are surely a daughter of faithful Abraham; see that you act in character. "After he

had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Our heavenly Father displays no less love than wisdom by trying our faith and patience, in order to increase and confirm them; and when we are tried, he will bring us forth as gold. We are not without our trials; but as for our mercies they abound. Our personal wants are but few; impressed with the importance of eternal realities, we attend to little beside. In this we are blessed, and make a blessing; happy in our God, in each other, and in our work.

Amongst the new converts, we have a female recently brought to receive the Gospel with childlike simplicity. In class last week, whilst speaking of the Lord's dealings with her, she caused our hearts to rejoice. O what wonders divine grace can accomplish!

"God is with us;" and we are seeking a daily conformity to all his righteous will. Let us ever cultivate the crowning grace of brotherly love, and pray that it may continue and increase till earth resemble heaven. Write soon, and inform us of all particulars, for you are very dear to us. Remember us to your young Minister; may he, prove to you all a savour of life unto life. My Anna desires her kind Christian love.

Believe me, my dear Madam,

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Mr. Osborn, Chatham.

Ottery St. Mary's, Aug. 14th, 1830.

MY DEAR OSBORN,

I HOPE never to forget the kindness shown me both by yourself, and our mutual friend Mr. S. You will perceive by my letter to him, that we are blessed with a measure of spiritual prosperity. Let us rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, and never cease our importunity until he shall arise and have mercy upon

Zion. Although I have no circuit, the state of my health being still an objection, I am left here somewhat like a Chaplain in full orders. Let it chiefly concern us to be where our heavenly Father would have us be, and what he would have us be: then all will be well. On the other hand,—

“If place I seek, or place I shun,
My soul finds happiness in none!”

I hope you are now going on unto perfection. Remember, our high calling is to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and “to be holy in all manner of conversation, even as he who hath called us is holy.” If you willingly bear your daily cross, and run with patience the heavenly race, you will not only secure light and comfort, but prove a blessing to many. That you may enjoy the full salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory, is the earnest prayer of,

My dear brother in Christ,

Yours affectionately,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

Extract from a Letter to Mrs. E.

Ottery, Aug. 27th, 1830.

My dear wife's fears have been excited, in consequence of my not having been quite so well lately, so that it is not probable that I shall again offer myself for the itinerant ministry. I feel it to be a proof of the Lord's goodness, that I have been preserved from marking out any path for myself. My dear Anna and I, having given ourselves to the Lord, believe that he will direct us. The precious promises are ours, and they are unfailing; therefore our spirits not only find rest, but we even “abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” While you pour out your hearts in prayer for us, let your praises ascend also; for our hearts are

glad in the Lord, and our spirits do rejoice in God our Saviour.

Sir John Kennaway is truly a kind friend and helper in the faith of Jesus ; he converses freely on the religion of the heart. I shall never forget our last conversation on perfect love, when the venerable Baronet very emphatically repeated those lines :—

“ Now let me gain perfection's height :
Now let me into nothing fall ;
Be less than nothing in thy sight ;
And feel that Christ is all in all ! ”

We have reason to believe that a young lady in this neighbourhood is receiving a baptism of the Spirit. She no longer cries out, “ Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” but enjoys the privilege of a believer, and testifies that “ there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. ” Amongst our members, who are chiefly the poor of this world, the Lord has favoured us with some jewels of high polish. We therefore live, for they stand fast in the Lord, and cultivate the fellowship of the Spirit. Another female, lately born again, is become a pattern of Christian faith and charity. She has weekly meetings for prayer in her house, and there my dear Anna meets a newly-formed class. Some of those united in Christian communion, enjoy a foretaste of heavenly glory. Others are still in the wilderness, though we believe they are following on to know the Lord. We have lately received an addition of twenty members, beside probationers : and there is evidently in many of them an earnest desire to enter into a present rest. I sometimes think we must enlarge the chapel ; but of this I am convinced, that my own heart greatly needs enlargement.

To Miss Maria Kennaway.

Ottery, Nov. 20th, 1830.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I MUCH regret that we were deprived of the pleasure of seeing you when you so kindly called. So many of the sick and poor need our services, that we feel it right to visit them as often as possible. In these labours of love the children of God are favoured with some faint illustration of his matchless grace and boundless love, as manifested in the work of Christ, who came to raise the fallen, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to fill the hungry with good things.

I hail it as a token for good to the church of Christ, that you are so sensibly alive to the baneful influence of secular concerns on the minds of those who are constituted stewards in the Lord's vineyard. This is a foul leprosy that infects the church; far more dreadful than that which the covetous Gehazi brought upon himself, and entailed on his posterity. I often think, with reference to this point, upon 2 Kings v. 26, "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?" There is danger lest even true Ministers of the sanctuary should have so much thick clay upon their eyes as to preclude them from pointing the people of their charge to a present Saviour. May we implore for all who are in the sacred office grace to serve the Lord in newness of spirit, and to prove ensamples to the flock.

Mr. R., the acting Trustee of the chapel, is anxious that it should be enlarged, both for the congregation and for a Sabbath-school. On these points I agree with him; but I consider your plan, which also embraces a day-school, so much to be preferred, that I am very solicitous to combine all these objects, and, if possible, without adding to the expense. I am glad that Mr. R.

is about to call at Escot Lodge, as you will then have his plan more fully laid before you.

That enlargement of heart which the Lord has given your honoured father towards this object, I view as one amongst many tokens of his favour. My Anna rejoices in the anticipation of its accomplishment ; and it appears to me that “ the time to favour this part of Zion, yea, the set time, is come.”

Accept my best thanks for the Life of Alleine. That bright star shows me more of my darkness ; how much more a contemplation of the character of the Sun of Righteousness.

I am, dear Madam,

Your humble servant, for Christ's sake,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Same.

Ottery, Sunday after Christmas, 1830.

OUR united and best thanks wait on you, dear Madam, and our ever valued friend, Miss Frances, who is also “ a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” The Lord was pleased to send by you a word in season, so that I am filled with joy, and my cup runneth over. The Lord, even our own God, who keepeth his covenant mercy, is intimately nigh. I feel him lifting up my head, and “ because he is on my right hand, I shall not be moved.” Warmed with love to him who for me endured the cross and despised the shame, I am constrained to say, “ My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope.” Is it not enough to be one of those spoken of in Zeph. iii. 12, 13, “ I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people,” &c. ; and Rev. vii. 14—17, “ These are they that have come out of great tribulation,” &c. ? Our hearts reply, “ It

is." "O praise the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." But, dear pilgrims, as Jehovah's discipline is seasonable, so will his aid be effectual ; therefore we may expect "to be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power ; unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness ; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." We are hastening home to our Canaan. Prayer shall soon be turned to praise, and we

"While endless ages run,
Rest in our Saviour's joy."

If Jesus our glorious Head, who knew no sin, wept and groaned, was made a curse, became a victim to death, and sunk under that weight of woe which he willingly took upon himself for us ; surely it is meet that, for a season, we who are destined to be with him and like him, should think our afflictions light when contrasted with the glory to which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they are designed to lead us. When is Jesus so divinely precious, as when sin and sorrow pursue us as a flood, and the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall ? On rising this morning, I felt better, and even ventured to chapel, and commenced the service ; but I soon had reason to suspect that my heavenly Father perceived in me, what was unknown to myself, a latent desire to be an active something. I was obliged, after beginning the service, to return, recollecting with shame how often I had promised, as I thought sincerely, to be anything or nothing, as the Lord pleased. Even this little exertion exhausted me ; my limbs trembled, and my head ached. A few Christian friends are just coming to hold sweet communion. Many prayers are offered for my restoration, and we feel assured of an interest in yours. But, O ! the privilege of the intercession of the great Advocate. The refreshment you sent was seasonable.

My beloved partner joins in thanks, and we hope never to forget your sympathy. I feel almost ashamed to send these hasty lines; but my heart is full, and your kindness encourages me. I trust we all unite in earnest prayer, that our souls may sink deeper into God.

I am, dear Madam,

Your unworthy brother,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Same.

Ottery, Jan. 5th, 1831.

It is at once my duty and privilege to thank you sincerely, very dear Madam, for the presents to us and our dear suffering sister. These temporal gifts are doubly acceptable, as they come from you in the name of Jesus, who is our hope. He is the spring of all our joy, and the bond of our union, in whom the rich and poor harmoniously meet together. Let us go and pay our grateful homage, as did once the Eastern Magi, to Him, "who though rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." In and from him are the true riches, with which you are enriched, and I trust will be more and more to all eternity. Hidden treasures are in our Immanuel. Let us open, with the key of faith, the whole arcana of spiritual blessings, the hidden manna and the new name, grace for grace, terminating in glory. Yet, paradoxical as it seems, we are most full when most needy, and most exalted when most abased. We often entreat our glorious Mediator to carry on his work of grace in you, and all the dear friends recommended to our feeble petitions; but before we are aware, prayer is often turned into praise.

Will you accept, and present to your dear sister Fanny, our best acknowledgments for her precious communications, the savour of which is found after many days? Your kind sympathy demands our thanks.

I desire simply to cast my care upon the Lord, and to suffer his will with patience. I can even rejoice that our heavenly Father's will is done, and shall be done, in his believing people ; and in proportion as I witness its accomplishment, I am filled with comfort, and am joyful in tribulation. To your kind inquiries I can only reply that I am still very weak. We purpose leaving this for Honiton, chiefly because circumstances calculated to cause excitement, with the constant calls to which I am subject, tend to counteract the measures adopted for my recovery. Before this last attack, I was often urged to exertion from an impression that the time was short ; it now appears no less my duty to cease from labour, although I trust but for a season. I am free from anxious care, and my dear Anna is graciously supported. The rent is certainly an object of consideration, and a dry air most desirable. As nothing which concerns his people is too minute for the Lord's notice, we commit this matter to him, and wait an intimation of his will.

My thanks attend your honoured father, your reverend brother, and yourself, for your kind solicitude. I shall be further obliged by any advice which may make our duty plain in this particular. We trust that the projected journey will be blessed of God to the benefit of both soul and body.

Yours, my dear Madam,

Very faithfully,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Miss Frances Kennaway.

Ottery, Feb. 2d, 1831.

ACCEPT, dear Madam, our best thanks for your last wellcome epistle. Nocturnal meditations have often afforded striking evidence, that " the Day-spring from on high " can pierce through nature's mantle, and, by his

gracious visitation, irradiate the soul with the light of life. The sweetest songs of sovereign love have frequently been vouchsafed in the night-season, especially in the night of affliction. I consider it a token of our heavenly Father's tenderest regard, that I am remembered by one of his favoured children. In the hour of solemn silence, the God of Jacob oft appears, as at Bethel, and opens, even on earth, the very gate of heaven. Transporting mercy: the place of his feet is at once dreadful and glorious! The subject to which you refer is of no small interest. Christians of deep experience in the things of God, will, I apprehend, owing to peculiar circumstances or natural constitution, differ in their views as to the propriety of encouraging a desire either for life or for death; and consequently as to whether it be a duty to engage the prayers of saints on their behalf in the time of sickness. Some, partly from a peculiar cast of mind, and partly from reading and association, are habitually disposed to reflect more frequently on that solemn subject, the sin and consequent misery of the human race. Intently considering how vast the field, how great the harvest, and yet how few the spiritual labourers, the powers of the mind will be roused and brought into action, whilst they are cheered and animated by the hope that they may be favoured as instruments of turning sinners from darkness to light. By such the mediatorial prayer of our great Intercessor, in John xvii. 15, will be highly prized, as affording a pledge and security that the Lord will preserve their lives to accomplish that gracious purpose. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to impress us with a sense of the importance and value of life; and, I conceive, a soul ripe for glory may have such views of the duties of a disciple of Christ, as may render the prayers of saints for the prolongation of his life desirable. Although he would dread living here for mere personal gratification, yet if he believe that the

I desire simply to cast my care upon the Lord, and to suffer his will with patience. I can even rejoice that our heavenly Father's will is done, and shall be done, in his believing people ; and in proportion as I witness its accomplishment, I am filled with comfort, and am joyful in tribulation. To your kind inquiries I can only reply that I am still very weak. We purpose leaving this for Honiton, chiefly because circumstances calculated to cause excitement, with the constant calls to which I am subject, tend to counteract the measures adopted for my recovery. Before this last attack, I was often urged to exertion from an impression that the time was short ; it now appears no less my duty to cease from labour, although I trust but for a season. I am free from anxious care, and my dear Anna is graciously supported. The rent is certainly an object of consideration, and a dry air most desirable. As nothing which concerns his people is too minute for the Lord's notice, we commit this matter to him, and wait an intimation of his will.

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Very faithfully,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Miss Frances Kennaway.

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ACCEPT, dear Madam, our best thanks for your last welcome epistle. Nocturnal meditations have often afforded striking evidence, that "the Day-spring from on high" can pierce through nature's mantle, and, by his

gracious visitation, irradiate the soul with the light of life. The sweetest songs of sovereign love have frequently been vouchsafed in the night-season, especially in the night of affliction. I consider it a token of our heavenly Father's tenderest regard, that I am remembered by one of his favoured children. In the hour of solemn silence, the God of Jacob oft appears, as at Bethel, and opens, even on earth, the very gate of heaven. Transporting mercy: the place of his feet is at once dreadful and glorious! The subject to which you refer is of no small interest. Christians of deep experience in the things of God, will, I apprehend, owing to peculiar circumstances or natural constitution, differ in their views as to the propriety of encouraging a desire either for life or for death; and consequently as to whether it be a duty to engage the prayers of saints on their behalf in the time of sickness. Some, partly from a peculiar cast of mind, and partly from reading and association, are habitually disposed to reflect more frequently on that solemn subject, the sin and consequent misery of the human race. Intently considering how vast the field, how great the harvest, and yet how few the spiritual labourers, the powers of the mind will be roused and brought into action, whilst they are cheered and animated by the hope that they may be favoured as instruments of turning sinners from darkness to light. By such the mediatorial prayer of our great Intercessor, in John xvii. 15, will be highly prized, as affording a pledge and security that the Lord will preserve their lives to accomplish that gracious purpose. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to impress us with a sense of the importance and value of life; and, I conceive, a soul ripe for glory may have such views of the duties of a disciple of Christ, as may render the prayers of saints for the prolongation of his life desirable. Although he would dread living here for mere personal gratification, yet if he believe that the

Lord hath need of him, the desire for life is virtually abiding in the Saviour's choice, and whilst he seeks not his own things but the things of others, that they may be saved, he daily finds his heaven in doing his Master's will. Again, there are contemplative Christians, so attracted by the glories of Immanuel and the bright anticipation of future blessedness, as almost to forget that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one;" and that, if they have been translated into the third heaven, it was that they might direct and encourage others in the path whereby they may reach the same elevation. Peter felt it good to be on Mount Tabor; but had he remained there, it would not have been good for the three thousand at Jerusalem converted under his preaching on the day of Pentecost. There is a deep meaning in Rom. xiv. 7—9, "No man liveth to himself," &c. No desire, either for life or death, can glorify God so much as the enjoyment and development of the fruit of the Spirit, as recorded in that Scripture. The choice is not, should not be ours, but rather a sinking into the divine will. "My times are in thy hand." Through the imperfection of our nature, or our need of a deeper baptism of the Holy Spirit, the desire, either for life or death, may be too predominant. An oppressed and but partially resigned spirit may desire to leave earth for heaven, as Jonah essayed to escape to Tarsus; although the reluctance to die more frequently proceeds from the power which the God of this world obtains, through its fascinations, over those whose cup runs over with temporal blessings. Thus, whilst multitudes of poor deluded souls, satisfied with a portion in this life, are chained down to earth; there are others who dishonour Christ, by too great eagerness to leave it before the appointed time. The Holy Spirit works a desire in the renewed soul to suffer with Christ on earth, as well as to reign with him in heaven. It appears from Mark x. 38, that when the state is good, the predominant feeling will be to drink of

his cup, and be baptized with his baptism. You, dear Madam, would probably judge it unseemly in a young Christian, who is commanded to forsake all and follow Christ, to adopt the language of Paul the aged, "I am in a strait between two," &c. (Phil. i. 22—25.) That ardent thirst you express for the joy that shall be revealed, is doubtless a fruit of divine love; still the armour must be buckled on till the dismissal come from above, and the longing soul must patiently labour, that whether present or absent it may be accepted of its Lord.

It is truly blessed to feel how the Lord, in the time of affliction, loosens us from every earthly tie, refines our dross, and raises us to himself; but a believer, though made meet for glory, is also prepared for further probation on earth, if God require it. A grant of fifteen,* or fifty years, is not too much to expect from the Lord in answer to the prayer of faith, and equally easy is it to him to preserve the humble devoted soul who only seeks his glory, through any period, in a state

* It is probable Mr. Lavers referred here to the miracle wrought by Jehovah on behalf of the pious King Hezekiah: or he might have had in view a remarkable interference of Divine Providence recorded in the life of the Rev. Thomas Charles, of Bala, which is, in substance, as follows. During one of his journeys for the benevolent, and, in that day, novel purpose of instituting Sunday-schools, a mortification, from extreme cold, seized one of his thumbs, and proceeded so far as to endanger his life. His flock at Bala, having heard the distressing tidings, assembled in the church to entreat the Lord for his recovery. An aged Christian present was led earnestly to pray that God would lengthen his valuable life *fifteen years*, for his own glory, and for the good of his church. "Only fifteen years, Lord!" was this good man's fervent and reiterated petition. The prayer of faith again prevailed: from that time Mr. Charles began to recover; and he was often heard to say, "I must be abundant in labour: my fifteen years are ebbing out;"—and precisely at the close of this remarkable era, that devoted servant of God entered into rest.

of preparedness for his heavenly inheritance. I am disposed to view James v. 14, 15, not only as a permission, but also as an injunction equally with that contained in verse 16. The encouragement held out, both by the promise connected, and the example of Elijah, favours this construction, and intimates that due care for the body, and intercessory prayer for the recovery of the sick, are duties incumbent on the faithful, and well-pleasing to the Lord.

I am, my dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

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To the Same.

Ottery, Feb. 4th, 1831.

I RETURN, dear Madam, from the very presence-chamber of our Immanuel, to enclose your letters with many thanks. Happy, truly happy are we, for we have found the Messiah, and in him all spiritual blessings:—

“Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore.”

Glory be to God the Father, for his unspeakable gift! Glory be to God the Son, for his assumption of our nature, to redeem us from the curse of the law, and out of the hands of the enemy! and glory be to God the Holy Ghost, for renewing and sanctifying grace, and a meetness to sit down upon the Conqueror's throne!

Our risen and exalted Head raises my soul far above all weakness, pain, and fear. Truly, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes me free from the law of sin and death. The death denounced by a violated law, and sealed on every guilty conscience, is removed by Christ from us, and the deadening, soul-destroying dominion of sin is overthrown by Christ in us: can we then, for a moment, fear death, that separa-

ion of soul and body which is but the prelude to glory? O, no! What balm is in Heb. ii. 14, 15. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood," &c. The deliverance is complete. This animates us to go forward with our dear companions in tribulation, whilst "the joy of the Lord is our strength." The days are dark and cloudy, and there are chilling blasts and threatening tempests; but, as you well observe, "The voice of the Lord is mightier than the noise of many waters." How cheering and reviving, after the gloom and barrenness of a winter season, are the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness; and how healing is the balm which he communicates, through the sympathies of Christian communion, in the time of affliction. The chamber of mystic fellowship, adorned with the portraits of the worthies drawn by the Apostle in Hebrews xi., has proved a Bethel to many a distressed and fainting spirit. To these we might, from grateful recollection, add many others, partakers of like precious faith. From the perusal of the precious letters transmitted us by your sisterly kindness, my dear Anna and I have lately been much in the society of both dead and living saints. May we imbibe more of their spirit, and be followers of them, even as they followed Christ. By faith we likewise enter the sacred chamber, where we meet the general assembly of the church of the first-born, where the King himself is held in the galleries. In one house where, since my illness, our social meetings have been carried on, the inscription over the door, to adopt Mr. Snow's phrase, has been manifestly exhibited to the joy of our hearts, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Since the Lord's controversy is already begun, and days of tribulation are fast approaching, let us, dear Madam, invite all to consider one another the more, "to provoke unto love and to good works." Accept our thanks for the interesting information respecting the

living members in the one body: they are borne daily upon our hearts, and we rejoice in their consolation. Dear C. appears to be worse in health, and at times cast down in spirits. W. B., a pious member of our society, is also ill, but the Lord careth for him. I have lately been suffering from another attack of illness; insomuch that total cessation from labour, and change of air, seem to be requisite for a season. My affectionate and sympathizing partner thinks seriously and prayerfully of this. Jer. x. 23, is much upon our minds: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Our desire is to know what the Lord would have us to do, and to be assured that he is directing our path. Kindly ask for us, that we may be truly meek; then will the Lord guide us in judgment and teach us his way. I entreat an interest in your prayers, and those of our Christian friends, whilst, blessed be the Lord, I equally welcome life or death. Please to accept our best thanks for all the tokens of your kindness. Our hearts desire, for you and yours, all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged unworthy servant,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Same.

Ottery, Feb. 15th, 1831.

You and the dear Escot friends will rejoice to hear that I have had strength to walk out this fine morning. Rom. viii. 10, 11, have followed me to-day, but the full meaning doth not yet appear. The Lord's goodness extends to the body, as well as to the soul; and although the former will not be changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body till we rise triumphant with our Head; still, when the soul receives by faith the

quickening Spirit, we are often conscious of a mighty power, animating the mortal frame, and raising it far above its native weakness and infirmity. As to myself, the Lord's goodness even prevents me, as the Psalmist speaks; it is a rock that cannot move, a sea of bliss, without a bottom or a shore. The language of my heart is, "Father, thy will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven." When our petitions are in harmony with the divine will, and nature is awed into silence; then the Spirit helps our infirmities, and brings the assurance of a gracious answer. Till we are lost in God, let us continue instant in prayer, since we shall very probably witness great judgments, and Zion may be left as a cottage in the wilderness, and as a besieged city. But glory is in view; even now it surrounds my soul: yet a very little while, and we shall see our Jesus as he is!

"Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given."

With this animating hope it is comparatively easy to work, to wait, or to suffer: only "Thy will be done."

I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged unworthy servant,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Misses Kennaway.

Honiton, March 1st, 1831.

DEAR LADIES,

WITH much Christian affection, I take my pen to inform you, that by the good hand of our God upon us, we arrived safely at this retreat on Saturday morning. Although much wearied, that peace which the Saviour bequeaths to his followers, abode with us.

Your great kindness induces me to mention the state of my health. From the use of the restoratives, I already feel sensible benefit, and I desire constantly to see the indulgent hand of my heavenly Father who, in

time of need, engaged in my behalf what I most value, the skill, the sympathy, and the prayers of such as know the grace of God in truth. O for a heart to praise him without ceasing, "for his mercy endureth for ever." As to our present state and future prospects, we know in whom we have believed, and that the Judge of all the earth will do right. One of the Nonconformist Ministers, when asked how he, his wife, and ten children would continue to live, answered, "We can live on the sixth chapter of Matthew." We have a little more than that; although the promise alone is sufficiently comprehensive. May we never forget to seek first the rich grant of the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other *needful* things will be added. Whilst unsettled as to our external condition, it fills us with delight to be called to follow the Lord into a land that is not sown. "He tells all our wanderings, and putteth our tears into his bottle; are they not noted in his book?" My earnest desire and prayer for you, dear ladies, and all our fellow-pilgrims, is, that the cross of Christ may be our throne, and his sufferings our crown. May the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, be, as with the great Apostle, objects of our intense desire; knowing that those who are partakers of the sufferings, when his glory shall be revealed, shall be glad also with exceeding joy.

Could not the Father of mercies have spared his beloved Son, Jehovah's fellow, when he made his soul an offering for sin? Could none of the angelic host who sang so sweetly at his birth, nor even the blessed Comforter himself, transmit one pitying ray, or infuse one drop of comfort into that mysterious cup of suffering? This is amazing! Great indeed, and awfully deep is the mystery of godliness. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." How great must that salvation be, which was wrought out and finished in a

manner so divine ! My soul kindles into a flame of grateful love : I rise by simple faith from Calvary, and lo ! I am caught up to the very heights of Zion. Here is righteousness, peace, and joy, whilst perfect love casteth out fear. It is indeed good for us to be here. Having been at the cross, and seen Jesus, I crave neither life nor death, nor any thing on earth or heaven, save Him who is my portion and my all :

“ My theme, my inspiration, and my crown !
 My strength in age, my rise in low estate !
 My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth, my world,
 My light in darkness, and my life in death ! ”

If health return, for this only will I live, to know and speak of Jesus Christ and him crucified. We are dead with him, and we have a hidden life ; shall we not then walk even as he walked ? “ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

We desire to present our Christian remembrances to Sir John, and your esteemed brother, to whom, as well as to yourselves, we are under obligations which we cannot express.

I remain, dear Ladies,

Yours in the best bonds,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Miss F. Kennaway.

Honiton, March 10th, 1831.

JESUS is very precious this morning. His banner over us is love ; all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. Grace is poured into his lips, and the lips of that Righteous One feed many. Do they not feed my dear Christian friend ? I have just asked my Anna what

she thinks of Jesus. Her reply is, "He is all my salvation and all my desire." How soon did our Jesus, the ancient Conqueror, snap the bow of steel, and destroy the artillery of Satan ; and what he once accomplished *for us*, he engages to do *in us*. The former conquest is the pledge of the latter, "Thy feet shall be iron, and thy shoes brass ; and as thy day, so shall thy strength be."

To Miss M. Kennaway.

Honiton, March 10th, 1831.

MY DEAR MADAM,

YOUR three valued letters have called forth our gratitude, and have led us to offer praise for your love to the Lord Jesus ; nor can I forbear expressing our thanks for the consolation you have afforded us in this time of need. St. Paul would have said, We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, sister. Seeing that the testimony of Christ is confirmed in you, and the other dear members of the mystical body, "I pray that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end."

The information you afford us respecting our dear sister revives our tenderest sympathies, whilst it causes our souls to rise in the high praises of Jehovah, who worketh so mightily in his people, that those who behold them may learn his name. Dear Mrs. C. K. is also in the furnace. We have found it good to make supplication on her behalf. The Lord often employs affliction to show his people that every thing here below is vanity, and to lead them to seek their happiness in himself. May the dear sufferers take comfort from Psalm lxxviii. 72, "So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart ; and guided them by the skilfulness of his

hands." Your dear brother's health and spirits are the Lord's gift, for which we rejoice. May he bless the means employed for the restoration of his beloved partner. Our Christian love, with thanks, wait on our dear sister Miss B. ; she will doubtless be enriched yet more and more ; for she is meek, one of them that shall inherit the earth, even the new earth, " wherein dwelleth righteousness." My present experience you may find in Psalm xxiii. All is bright, no eloud, no doubts, no slavish fear.

I trust this will find your honoured father, yourself, and all our Christian friends, in health and peace.

I am, my dear Madam,
Your obliged and faithful brother in Christ,
WILLIAM LAVERS.

In the following letter to the Misses Kennaway are happily blended a correct estimate of filial duty, and of the fittest offering suggested by a grateful spirit :—

Honiton, April 6th, 1831.

MY DEAR LADIES,

BEING unable to ride over to Escot to-day, before we visit Dartmouth, I write to express our grateful acknowledgments for your numerous favours, especially for your kindness in stirring us up to serve the mystical body of our exalted Redeemer. We have now what nature would call great trials. When I joined the church of Christ, my parents forbade me their dwelling ; but, blessed be the name of the Lord, he has enabled me to administer to their comfort in age and decrepitude, and love to their souls makes me restless till I can get to them, and once more proclaim the message of reconciliation. We desire, with a deep and humbling sense of gratitude to Almighty God, to present our Christian love and cordial thanks to your honoured father, for having contributed so largely to our comfort whilst in

your neighbourhood, and especially for all he has done in favour of that cause which is dearer to us than life. Though unable to express, as I would, my sense of kindness received, I hope a grateful heart will always be given me, to offer up most earnestly on his behalf the prayer of the Apostle for the house of Onesiphorus. (2 Tim. i. 16.) Should you find leisure to favour us with a letter, please to direct to me at Dartmouth.

I am, dear Ladies,

Your humble and devoted brother in Christ,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Sir John Kennaway, Bart.

Dartmouth, May 14th, 1831.

HONOURED SIR,

BEING sufficiently recovered to take up my pen, I was unwilling to leave this place for a season, before I had offered to you my most sincere thanks for your valuable aid in the cause of Christ, both at Ottery and Honiton, and for the many favours conferred upon us, from the time I was first permitted to minister to those societies. Having been led by Providence to collect the scattered flock, and form them into a Christian society, they naturally looked to me for counsel and direction. This I gave to the best of my judgment, and, I may add, to the satisfaction of all parties. Many circumstances have occurred which strengthen our attachment to that people; and we should leave our post with reluctance whilst the Lord is pleased to make use of us as instruments for the good of immortal souls. Since they are unanimous in desiring that we should dwell amongst them, I have accepted their call to labour after the next Conference, if the Lord be pleased to favour me with health and strength.

Were it not for the full conviction I have that the Lord doeth all things well, my removal from Ottery

before the stipulated time, in consequence of ill health, would have proved a much heavier trial than it has done. Convinced that there is no enjoyment comparable to sinking into the divine will, I feel entirely resigned both as to the past and the future.

I am happy to inform you that my health is evidently improving. In addition to the many favours we have already received, allow me to solicit an interest in your prayers, that we may return to the flock at Honiton, "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace."

That you may long be preserved as a blessing to the church of Christ; that you may be "filled with all joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," is the prayer of,

Honoured Sir,

Your much obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

In the subjoined letter will be found another proof that the Christian alone properly estimates and enjoys the beauties of nature, in whose simple but sublime school he finds the graces of reverential love, adoring gratitude, and cheerful obedience elicited and strengthened. Surrounded by her scenes of magic loveliness, and led by them to the footstool of Deity, his inmost soul echoes the language of the poet:—

"E'en Nature's works, when all within is right,
Themselves faint copies of the' Excelling Fair,
Afford a feast of overflowing bliss,
Whilst the *occasion*, not the *cause* of joy."

To the Misses Kennaway.

Barham, May 30th, 1831.

DEAR LADIES,

You have, probably, been expecting a letter from us; and I ought, before this, to have called on you to praise the Lord on our behalf.

Convinced, however, that you will not consider an apology needful, I will throw myself on that sisterly kindness, so constantly shown to us, for the Lord's sake. On Monday we left Dartmouth, and on the road to Torquay we narrowly escaped being overturned. Our heavenly Father gave his angels charge over us ; and under his protecting care we safely reached that charming spot, where every object that meets the eye is calculated to instruct a believer's heart. I was sweetly led into the views expressed by St. Paul, in Rom. i. 20 ; " For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." At this vernal season more especially, all nature forms a mystic ladder, by which we may ascend to spiritual and eternal realities. Having to wait several hours for the arrival of the packet from Plymouth, we lifted up our hearts to be directed in the employment of our precious time ; shortly after we were conducted to the house of an old disciple, with whom we took sweet counsel. Having rested awhile, we were introduced to several young Christians, in whom we witnessed pleasing marks of humility and godly sincerity. Before we left, I had the privilege of being called to the bedside of a very young man, near the saints' eternal home :

" With death-like paleness on his face,
But glory in his soul."

To crown the mercies of the day, and to show how truly the Lord careth for his own, the packet was full two hours later than usual, owing to wind and tide being against it ; so that we were in the act of going on board as the mail came in, and brought us your welcome present. Circumstances which we could not control caused our expenses to be greater than we had anticipated ; and your kind contributions proved, under Providence, a needful as well as seasonable supply.

Large possessions can never afford a joy equal to that which we experienced on receiving such a proof that the hairs of our head, even our most minute concerns, are all numbered. I mention this that you may unite with us in praising the Lord; and we also solicit your prayers that we, in whose behalf God has so often graciously appeared, may never be unmindful of the Rock of our salvation. May we and all the Lord's people more fully commit our ways unto him, even in things which appear to be of the least importance.

Although the motion of the vessel precluded our sleeping, we were kept in peace, and in the morning hailed with delight the beautiful scene which lay before us. After resting two hours at Portsmouth, we proceeded by coach to London. The next morning we embarked in the steam-packet for Ramsgate, which we reached in safety that night, and on the following day we were brought thus far in peace, decidedly recruited by our voyage.

The passages which you have selected from Psalm lxxxi. have been peculiarly seasonable, nor did I ever so fully feel their force as when turning from your note to the Bible.

I am thankful to state that my health improves greatly: my dear wife also continues well; her mother and our Christian friends received us with much kindness. Our meetings for social prayer are blessed, and the Lord is present according to his word. We shall feel obliged by your conveying our Christian love to those friends in your circle who kindly remember us. We rejoice on account of Mr. and Mrs. C. K., and pray that all the goodness of God may be confirmed to them. Accept our thanks for the contents of the parcel, as well as for many similar favours. I would likewise acknowledge the kindness of the unknown Exeter friends. Our removal from Ottery appears plainly to be the leading of

Providence ; and my path of duty clear to accept the call to Honiton.

I find there is no time this post to touch upon the subject of the books, but I hope to notice them in my next.

May grace, mercy, and peace be with you until the day of Jesus Christ.

I am, dear Ladies,
Your truly obliged Friend,
WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Same.

Barham, June 7th, 1831.

WE desire, dear ladies, to offer you our warmest thanks for your valuable communications. They tended to revive, quicken, and edify our spirits. Greatly do we rejoice that the Holy Spirit so manifestly preserves you steadfast amidst all the baits and allurements to which you are exposed, determined to glory only in the cross of Christ. I would not take off my eye, even for a moment, from contemplating the King of righteousness and King of peace. It is well for the ruined sons of men that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man has been lifted up. I can truly say, that in all my sensibility of sin, one believing glance towards the cross is of infinitely greater value than a universe. What consolation and joy are derived from an appropriating act of faith :—

“ I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me ! ”

To be separated and offered unto the Lord, agreeably to the precious hint given in your last, is indeed our privilege. That state is distinctly marked in the history of our dear brother Groves. He appears as a bright

pattern of primitive piety and devotedness : his whole life seems an exemplification of that entire consecration commanded in the holy Scriptures, and recommended in his little work. His last letter, which neither of us had seen before, came most seasonably ; it has sent me many times on my knees to the mercy-seat. I now return it, with many thanks, and entreat you to continue to pray that your unworthy brother and his dear partner, with such striking examples before them, may not fail of the grace of God. We never cease to pray for you, whilst we also offer praise for the grace already manifested in you both, to the glory of our exalted Head.

I feel it incumbent on me to tender my thanks to dear Sir John, for his very kind consideration of Mr. ——. I received a letter from him, in which he expresses great thankfulness. I trust he will be led to see, from this act of mercy, that there is a blessed reality in the religion of the Gospel, when seated as a principle in the heart.

May we hope to hear from you soon ? Be assured that we remain,

Dear Ladies,

Your obliged and devoted servants in Jesus.

WILLIAM AND ANNA LAVERS.

Extract from a Letter to Mrs. Hall.

Barham, July 21st, 1831.

DEAR MADAM,

THE remembrance of your Christian kindness is too strongly impressed upon my mind for me to neglect any favourable opportunity which occurs for its acknowledgment. We have often been privileged to hear of your welfare through the medium of our friends at Denmark-Hill, and we rejoice to learn that you still retain both

the will and power of going about doing good. There is, however, great danger of self-deception in our day, and of resting in a profession of religion devoid of its power. The creed may be sound, convictions felt, much zeal manifested, and occasional enjoyment follow, especially while hearing a favourite Minister, or reading a select book ; whilst there exists not one spark of saving grace in the heart. To judge of our spiritual state chiefly by external acts and duties, is a fatal error. To accomplish this effectually we must apply to ourselves the test urged by St. Paul, in 2 Cor. xiii. 5, "Examine yourselves," &c., connecting therewith the prayer of the royal Psalmist, (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24,) "Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." I trust my kind friend enjoys constant communion with God in his word, his ordinances, and his people. The Lord Jesus, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, ever lives to draw us into holy communion with the Father by his own most precious blood, which speaks our sins forgiven, and, applied by the Holy Spirit, seals us sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Union with God, the communication of the graces of the Spirit from him, and the constant return of humble and devout affections to him, is the substance of all true religion, little as they are prized by very many. I sincerely thank you for your Christian sympathy during my late trials, and hope that when it pleased the Lord to afflict, he was also present to support *you*. Believe me, my prayers were not wanting in your calamity. My kind remembrances to all the family.

I am, dear Madam,

Your servant in Christ,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Lavers takes the charge of the society at Honiton.—His declining health.—Extracts from his Correspondence.—Some particulars of his last severe illness and triumphant death.—Tributes to his memory and worth.

It will be seen, by referring to his correspondence, that when Mr. Lavers accepted the invitation to Honiton, he made no stipulation to the society relative to his support. It is not from this to be inferred that he did not recognise the apostolic injunction, that they which minister in holy things should *live* of the things of the temple, and they which wait on the altar be partakers of the altar; but he conceived that their support, and that of the Gospel, should not be by constraint, but of a ready mind; and that the people should provide, not as the Minister might dictate, but as the Lord had blessed them. He was also of opinion that there were cases which called for the gratuitous proclamation of the Gospel, if practicable; and that a peculiar reward is held out in the Scripture to those who preach it without charge. And we believe it difficult to explain the reward spoken of by the Apostle in 1 Cor. ix. 17, 18, "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward," &c., when taken in its connexion, without supplying some distinctive epithet. Irrespective of this impression, it was no sacrifice to Mr. Lavers to forego his liberty in this respect, being one of the few entitled to the *encomium* given to the early Christians, "They despise riches."

As he entered into no compact for a stipend, nor even for a dwelling; on his arrival, a difficulty rose as to a suitable residence. In this respect his wishes were

happily realized, by the offer of one, alike suited to his state of health, and to his finances ; the owner of which, it subsequently appeared, was on the eve of quitting Honiton. Mr. and Mrs. Lavers entered their new abode with grateful feelings, recognising, in the arrangement, the finger of a gracious Providence. The desiderata were, that it should be perfectly dry and airy, contiguous to the chapel, and moderately rated.

The delicate state of Mr. Lavers's health, and his consequent inability to keep up an extended correspondence, will account for the absence of a detailed relation of the success of his labours. There is, nevertheless, ample evidence that whilst he continued at Honiton, he made full proof of his ministry. During the few months in which he had sufficient strength to perform the round of his ministerial duties, the public services were well attended, and the class-meetings and other social exercises maintained with life and power. From time to time, sinners were converted and brought into the Gospel fold, insomuch that, during the first quarter, the number of the society was doubled. Of several of these new converts, the most satisfactory accounts have been received ; and the results which such a change never fails of producing, were conspicuous in the sphere where, as elevated lights, they exhibited the word of life.

The author of the "Task" penned a severe, but not unfounded philippic, when he affirmed, "that fame begets favour, and that one talent, if rubbed a little bright by use and practice, will procure a man more friends than a thousand virtues." On the other hand, it is no inconsiderable proof of the progress and triumph of our holy religion, that in the higher walks of society many have recently risen, and more are emerging from the world, as stars of magnitude in our spiritual horizon, who prize and cultivate the society of consistent and exemplary Christians, especially of faithful Ministers,

without nicely balancing, in the scales of fashionable Christianity, the caste of birth, or the weight of fortune and education.

With such Mr. Lavers was privileged to meet; and he enjoyed delightful Christian intercourse with the family of his venerable patron, by whom he was introduced to some kindred spirits in their favoured circle, whose kindness in the time of his affliction evinced that they esteemed him highly in love for his work's sake.

In this society he invariably walked with meekness of wisdom, giving honour to whom honour was due; at the same time magnifying his office, by that consistency of character, and holy elevation of spirit and converse, which invariably arrest attention and ensure respect. It has pleased God to honour his image before men. Faint as it is, even in the best, still proximity in moral character will have effect, and it exercises a portion of God's own power over the hearts of his creatures. Amongst those by whose friendship and regard Mr. Lavers was thus distinguished, were Christians, differing from him, not only as to rank in society, but upon forms of church government, and on the doctrines termed, by way of distinction, the five points.

Not to dwell upon the opportunities he enjoyed of bearing his testimony to the truth and power of the Gospel, and of being edified by the mutual experience and prayers of some of his devoted servants, he had there the advantage both of studying and practising lessons which could not have been learned in an inferior school.

In forming a correct judgment of the character and motives of mankind, intercourse with persons of elevated station and cultivated understanding affords an advantage similar to that of the physiologist, who is conversant with the structure and functions of the human body, over the savage who exercises it, regardless of its wonderfully nice and complicated machinery. From this

source we may learn more clearly, that rank and fortune are by no means evil in themselves, as some imagine, but instruments of great and extensive good ; and that, far from there being a necessary connexion between the possession and the love of them, the greatest indifference is often manifested by those to whom they most properly belong.

Through this medium, illumined from above, we are taught to recognise the equity and the goodness of God in awarding to his intelligent family their various talents and resources, "*according to their several ability.*" Here we may behold, in living characters, the greater honour and consequent capability of usefulness counter-balanced by the increased responsibility ; and perceive that, whilst one talent would inadequately engage the powers of him who has five ; the five would prove a burden to him who has two ; and probably a snare as well as a burden to him who has the one.

Here we may also learn, that opinions which affect not the fundamentals of religion, are often found devoid of that influence which we are apt to attribute to them ; and that a holy walk and a useful life depend not so much upon doctrines, as upon the will and the affections.

The more elevated and diversified our intercourse, the more we discover the influence which education and society, as well as the cast of mind, exert on the diverse modes of thought and language of different members of the same household of faith ; and that, while controversialists are disputing for what they term truth ; truth, like charity, is one and indivisible.

If it be inquired how it came to pass that no jarring string interrupted the harmony of these Christian friends, whilst as yet they saw not, in all points, eye to eye ; the courtly Waller has supplied us with the uniting principle, which was in fact the finishing lesson in this school of Christ :—

“ Why, they forebore dispute, and practised love,
Hence they agreed as angels do above.”

The glorious period is advancing, when "the Lord shall take away the reproach of his people," and "build again Zion." She shall arise, and heavenly-mindedness being the soul-pervading temper, and holiness to the Lord the universal element of her sons and daughters, she shall shine forth, "the perfection of beauty." Then error and superstition, envy and discord, with every unholy passion, shall be banished to the regions of darkness, whence they sprung. Lively faith, exalted piety, and fervent charity, encircling her with the girdle of perfection, "the Gentiles shall come to her light, and Kings to the brightness of her rising." The love of Christ the governing principle, and the glory of God the sublime end, the salvation of the untold millions constituting his intelligent and blood-bought family, shall be the glorious issue: earth shall be converted into the porch of heaven; and the Redeemer "shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" in the establishment of his universal spiritual monarchy.

But in order that his church may be constituted a fit instrument for accomplishing so blessed a consummation, there must be combined, importunate prayer that will take no denial; entire consecration that withholds no sacrifice; since alms accompany the prayers that go up as a memorial before God;* union with all the faithful

* President Edwards, in his "Thoughts on the Revival," &c., has the following remarks:—"Rich men are far beyond others in advantages to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities it is, that, for want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world!—It seems to me that in this age most of us have but very narrow and penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects the use and disposal of our temporal goods.—If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and as rich men will act by and by who shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom."—*Edwards's Works*, vol. vi., pp. 210, 211.

that knows no bigotry;* and love to God and man that knows no limit.

We are almost instinctively led to attach importance to the last words or latest records of men who have attained to eminence in their respective stations; hence it may be presumed that the closing correspondence of the subject of this memoir will be perused with peculiar interest, especially by those who maintained with him the intimacy of Christian fellowship.

Although it cannot be said of him, as of the great Lawgiver, that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," yet will it be manifest, from his epistles, that he saw, in our far brighter dispensation, "those things which the angels desire to look into;" and, not as Moses, who put a veil over his face; he, with unveiled face, beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, was transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

To Miss M. Kennaway.

Honiton, July 27th, 1831.

DEAR MISS MARIA,

YOUR valued letter has only now reached us, or it would have been answered sooner. Through the good hand of our God upon us, we arrived here in safety this morning. The gracious circumstances attending our journey call for a song of gratitude and praise. The Lord appeared and said to her who is of a fearful heart,

* The Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, in the spirit of true catholicity, observes, "Nothing more tends to exasperate our prejudices, to narrow our minds, and make us deformed and dwarfish creatures, than to read only books of one side, see only men of one party, and collect facts of one complexion. Let us seek the friendship of wise and good men wherever we can find them; let piety alone be sufficient passport to our hearts."

“Be strong.” Truly “the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.” He shall choose our inheritance. “The shields of the earth belong to God,” even God with us: “He is greatly exalted.” Reports of opposition would still make us afraid: but though we grieve that Satan succeeds in causing division amongst brethren, we will still hold up the shield of faith, and plead the sure word of promise, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

Since the receipt of your last, we have visited our dear friends at Denmark-Hill; and left them yesterday morning, enriched with the blessing of peace. Our intercourse was peculiarly refreshing. Christian communion strengthens the reign of grace; and I trust we were all edified by our mutual faith and prayer. Still we must guard against carnal ease and false security. The true spiritual church must be built in troublous times when the Lord of hosts will shake the earth and the heavens, the sea and the dry land. I know that you and your dear sister will entreat the Lord, that all the things which befall us may turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. I mourn my weakness, and wonder at my Saviour's love. It seems almost overpowering to be so honoured as to be brought into the church, which is the bride, the Lamb's wife; to be made one spirit with Christ; in that one spirit to suffer awhile, and then to stand in triumph with him on mount Zion; yea, and reign with him for ever and ever. Glorious visions rise before me in contemplating this delightful subject. But O, for the fulness of God in the soul; to be, like Barnabas, “full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith;” then might we hope that even before the full development of the latter-day glory, “much people will be added unto the Lord.” May our gracious God strengthen you mightily day by day. I trust this will find you and dear Miss Fanny sowing plentifully.

The care you have kindly shown relative to a servant

for us, will not be soon forgotten. This, in the time of persecution, we esteem the greater mercy. We desire to wait and see what may be the Lord's will concerning us. No arrangement as to pecuniary matters has been made with the society here. This we are far from regretting, since our warm-hearted but poor friends have been under no temptations to offer above their means, while some who, I regret to say, seem to misconstrue all I do, will have no ground to think I have come to this station for worldly advantages.

Accept my thanks for your attention to my message to your honoured father. It is no small comfort to hear of the Lord's goodness to him, and this consoles us under the debt of gratitude which we owe him, but never can repay. Will dear Miss Fanny be pleased to accept our thanks for the sweet portions from the Scriptures, as well as for her prayers? One circumstance of a temporal nature we just mention, that you may praise the Lord with us. When we arrived at Barham, we found the whole neighbourhood the seat of disease; yet we were mercifully preserved; my health is greatly improved, and I am confirmed in the belief that the Lord directed us hither.

Our dear brother, now in a distant clime, has been much spoken of, and we believe his zeal will provoke very many. May the Lord direct him in all his steps. With Christian love to the friends with you,

I remain, in holy fellowship of the saints,

Dear Madam, yours most truly,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To Miss F. Kennaway.

Honiton, Oct. 20th, 1831.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I forgot, on Lord's day, to congratulate you on your profitable intercourse with Lady L. I have also had opportunities of being acquainted with some pious

mystics. Their views even on fundamentals may well be termed mystic ; for though we regard them as ransomed ones, turned in spirit to Jesus, and redeemed from the earth, still their peculiar sentiments and experience remind me of our great national work in Plymouth Harbour : since the deceitful waters of mysticism have no small tendency to hide the sure foundation from their view : hence, much of the benefit of beholding, in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, is lost. But because of this, shall we tend to increase their darkness by an unchristian neglect ? God forbid. You have not so learned Christ. O, what joy will break in upon our souls, liable as we all are to err in and of ourselves, when our hidden life shall be revealed. Till then let us imitate the Master's example, and teach our brethren "as they are able to bear it ;" (John xvii. 12 ;) continuing instant in prayer for the accomplishment of the promise contained in the following verse, "He will show you things to come."

In regard to dear Mrs. R., my prayer is that she may renounce this deceitful world and all its greatness, as a grievous incumbrance ; keep herself from idols, converse daily with the heavenly Bridegroom, and by an act of simple faith entreat him to take entire possession of her heart, and therein erect his throne. I am glad she has none of that carnal assurance, by which thousands are rendered falsely secure, and are, I fear, eternally lost. Alas ! they know the Gospel in theory, amuse themselves with mere views, live according to the course of this world, wound Jesus in the house of his friends, and yet, with presumptuous assurance, infer their salvation from their creed. Pray for the peace of our little society. My dear partner unites in Christian love with,

Dear Madam,

Your faithful and obliged servant,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

To the Misses Kennaway.

Honiton, Sept. 30th, 1831.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I FEEL constrained to send a few lines, if it be only to thank you for your kind solicitude on our behalf, which deeply affects our hearts. You are moreover precious to my mind, as instruments of our heavenly Father in promoting that peace and joy which is our favoured portion. Let me hope that you are this morning realizing full salvation, salvation even to the uttermost. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.) "If I may but touch the hem of his garment," said a great sufferer, "I shall be whole." Here is an example for our faith. But what would she have said, how would she have believed, had she been privileged, as we are, to read the foregoing testimony of Paul the aged? And is not our Jesus the Saviour of the body as well as the soul? Yes,

"He'll not forget his gracious skill,
Nor lose the virtue of his name."

What a sin must that be which caused the Lord Christ to marvel! May he save us to-day from its very remains, and in the fountain of his precious blood wash away the vile dregs which lie at the bottom of a deceitful heart.

"More of thy presence, Lord, impart;
More of thine image let me bear;
Erect thy throne within my heart,
And reign without a rival there."

Our Psalm for the day, the 12th, is most appropriate. Looking to Jesus, it is no presumption to expect a great light in every season of darkness; nor can we fear evil tidings when our hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord. In reviewing the case of dear Miss H. B., my

soul has mourned over the many who are trying to find a half-way house between earth and heaven, between the world and Christ. I am burdened for these poor deluded souls, who appear to learn something of the Beloved, only to become the more miserable by what they know. If, my dear friends, you have any such at E——, permit an unworthy brother, who owes you much in the Lord, to remind you of Joel ii., “Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble ; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand ;” and to urge you to be instant in prayer, that the word of truth, the sword of the Spirit, in your hands, may have a good edge and point, that Satan may feel it even in the stronghold of an unbeliever’s heart. Should he roar, fear not ; he shall soon be bruised under your feet, for his doom is fixed. May peace and love be abundant in your souls unto the perfect day, till you shine amongst those whom the King delighteth to honour.

So prays, dear Ladies,

Your devoted friend in the Lord Jesus,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

The following letter, being his latest communication to the Editor, was received about a month before the writer of it exchanged earth for heaven :—

Honiton, Oct. 6th, 1831.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I THANK my God upon every remembrance of you, making request with joy, that you may be “emptied of all but love,” and “filled with all the fulness of God.” May you walk before the Lord, as the worthies recorded in Heb. xi., who were perfect *in their generation* ; but imitating most closely those who lived under that glorious dispensation, which the ascending Saviour

opened heaven to shed forth upon a ransomed world. Thus will your hidden light be manifest in its effects to all around; and your path, like that of the just, shall be "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Let us meditate more frequently and intensely on the vast privilege of our high calling to perfect holiness here, and to endless glory hereafter. At all times, and in all circumstances, we shall do well in attending to the gracious precept in Heb. iii. 1, 2, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ." That passage has been often blessed to my soul. By disregarding it, we are in danger of imbibing the latitudinarian spirit of the age, and of being allured by the reiterated cry, "Lo! here is Christ, and lo! there;" from the sinner's sole refuge, the only sure foundation.

During the last two months, subjects of deep and solemn import have been more fully opened to my understanding, and sealed upon my heart, by the impress of the Holy Ghost. I feel as one returned from the grave, for a season, to testify of the necessity of experiencing a present salvation; and of the support those precious truths, on which we have dwelt together in seasons of delightful fellowship, afforded me when on the border of the valley of the shadow of death. I believe we are united in maintaining the necessity of a meetness for the heavenly inheritance, and in resolving to strive till we obtain it. Consequently we should feel increasing solicitude for those professed disciples of Christ, who tell us they hope to be with him hereafter in glory, notwithstanding they are not seeking to be like him, by being made holy here.

I cannot describe the aid and solace my dear wife has afforded me in my late affliction. Amidst all her anxiety and fatigue, her health has continued uninterrupted. This was indeed a superadded mercy, since, had it proved otherwise, I should have had sorrow upon sorrow.

Pray for me, that, unworthy as I am, whilst life shall last, I may be employed in the great work of the ministry, as "a vessel sanctified and fitted for the Master's use."

I am,

Your obliged and affectionate brother in Christ,

WILLIAM LAVERS.

P.S. We taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and trust that you also are labouring to enter into his rest. This is the Lord's day morning; let us strive and pray that others may, with ourselves, "draw water from the wells of salvation;" be satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and "drink of the river of his pleasures."

In the subjoined extract from a letter to the Misses Kennaway, we are presented with a lucid summary of the qualifications requisite for the ministerial office.

Honiton, October 12th, 1831.

THE great Head of the Church has conferred on me a most important and responsible charge, being placed, as a Minister of the Gospel, in the fore-front of the battle.

What meekness and gentleness, blended with firmness and decision; what tender compassion, and what unbending fidelity; what constant diligence and incessant labour, with long patience; what heavenly wisdom, and what childlike simplicity; what burning zeal, tempered with bowels of mercies; in short, what an assemblage of gifts and graces appear requisite for the faithful and successful discharge of this solemn and momentous office. I study to have the Apostle's advice to his son Timothy constantly before me, 2 Tim. i. 1—4; iv. 2—4; and earnestly desire, in his strength, again to engage in the work of my Lord and Master. It is well for us that we have the gracious assurance, "Our sufficiency is of God." Still, conscious of our innate weakness, how earnestly should we entreat an interest in the prayers of

all saints.* But my kind friends may be disposed to inquire, how goes on the warfare within? Blessed be the Lord, my strength, for he teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. He holdeth my trembling soul in spiritual life, and even in the fiercest assaults of the enemy, he suffers him not to exact upon me, nor to cast me down. Yea, more; Christ manifests himself within, bruising the Serpent's head, and conquering all my foes. There he rules, destroying passion, pride, self-will, and self-seeking; and in every time of danger and distress, his language is, "Stand still, and see my salvation." I can say with truth, Jesus is very precious, in his person, his obedience and atonement, his intercession and his government, his sceptre and his cross. With regard to his dear members here below, my whole soul cries out, with that blessed man of God, Mr. Fletcher,

"O let my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesus' witnesses:
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet."

Those dispensations of Providence which call forth the deepest sighs, often tend the most effectually to brighten the believer's graces, and will hereafter prove to have inspired his loftiest songs. Affliction is that dark ground which exhibits most prominently, and in brightest characters, the love and faithfulness of a covenant God and Father; and rich fruits are borne by as many as

* It is worthy of remark that the chief of the Apostles appears to have been the only one who implores for himself and his co-workers in the ministry, an interest in the prayers of the faithful. Truly did the poet write,—

"Nearest the throne itself must be,
The footstep of humility."

patiently endure the training. One of our poets has thus happily recorded the sentiment :—

“Sorrow illumed by faith, grows bright
With more than rapture’s ray ;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.”

But, as in nature we love to trace those tints which paint with magic charms the scenery of things, to the bright source whence they emanate ; so the Christian delights in tracing up to the Sun of Righteousness each ray of light and beam of love which illumine the path of the just.

Aided by the joint reminiscences of her who sorrows not without hope, and of an esteemed friend and benefactress, enter we now on the closing scene of this faithful servant of Christ, and mark we the divine support and heavenly consolation afforded him throughout a season of severe and almost uninterrupted suffering.

“With growing strength, we saw him tread,
His upward, brightening, heavenward road ;
And joyfully lift up his head
To hail the city of his God.”

Mr. Lavers experienced his first severe attack on the 16th of August, shortly after his return to Honiton ; and that gracious promise will appear to have been fulfilled both through this, and the subsequent more severe afflictive dispensation, “ He will make all his bed in his sickness.”

To a kind friend who sympathized both in his sorrow and in his joy, he remarked, “ Jesus is love ; indeed he is quite a paradise to my soul ; he keeps me in perfect peace, so that no dart of Satan is suffered to reach me, or for a moment to shake my confidence : he constantly nourishes me with his word, and gives me “ songs in the night.”

So ardent was his attachment to the Scriptures that

when his disorder was at its height, and his pains the most acute, he would constantly ask those who attended him to read some portions of the word of God, which, he assured them, never failed to alleviate his suffering.

Prior to this visitation, when he thought his dear wife was asleep, she has often observed him rise from the bed, and on his bended knees engage in communion with his God: and at this time, after a day passed in severe bodily suffering, he would often express a desire for strength sufficient to enable him to spend the night in prayer and praise.

In all his affliction he recognised the love of his heavenly Father. When partially recovered, he declared to those around him, that during the most agonizing pain, he felt fully conscious that the everlasting arms were underneath him. Shortly after, addressing a young man for whom he felt a lively interest, he remarked, that when on the borders of an eternal world, he felt the Saviour nearer than he could express, with an assurance that he would conduct him safely through the dark valley to his own immediate presence.

From this bed of sickness the Lord was pleased to raise him up again for a short season. Tidings of his danger, and of the very faint hope of his recovery, had been forwarded to his intimate friends, who hailed his restoration as an answer to the earnest prayers of the Lord's people in various sections of his church.

One instance of the Lord's watchful care may be recorded, as calculated to illustrate the doctrine of a particular Providence, and to inspire confidence in the hearts of his tried and afflicted servants.

At the commencement of Mr. Lavers's first illness, Dr. R., who resided about thirty miles distant, had occasion to visit Honiton, in order to arrange the affairs of a departed relative. He was one day making inquiries as to the progress of Methodism, a cause in which he felt much interested, when Mr. Lavers's delicate state of health

was referred to: upon which Mrs. R. intimated that the Doctor would be happy to give him his advice. This circumstance was brought to Mrs. Lavers's remembrance at a juncture when skilful treatment was of the greatest moment. The Doctor was applied to, and he most kindly and assiduously attended, visiting his patient at all seasons. No sooner was he restored by the blessing of God upon the measures adopted, than Dr. R., having accomplished the object of his visit, left Honiton, carrying with him, in spite of their remonstrances, no other remuneration than the luxury of doing good to one of the servants of Christ.

It is needless to multiply instances of this nature, which, however different in circumstantialia, mark the progress of every pilgrim from the town of destruction to the celestial city: still, a reference even to minute particulars of divine superintendence may subserve valuable ends. In one point of view, the most minute are the most encouraging, since they afford palpable evidence of the truth of the Saviour's declaration, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered:" and prove that with Him who is "God all-sufficient," nothing is great, nothing small, that has reference to the security or comfort of his obedient children.

To this now glorified saint, Zion at large was very dear. He deeply lamented the lethargy or lukewarmness of the churches of Christ, and the few and partial evidences of a spirit of love and unity amongst many of his professed disciples. He felt keenly, not only on behalf of those who despised or rejected the grace of the Gospel, but for such as expressed no solicitude to bring forth fruit to perfection. In harmony with these feelings he manifested the most lively interest in the prosperity of that part of it which he had planted and watered, and over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. Some of his latest days were occupied in earnest prayer that all the graces of the Spirit might distinguish

that little flock ; that the holy flame of love might consume all jealousies and contentions, and that being perfectly joined together in love, they might make a firm and successful stand against the common enemy. He earnestly recommended to their serious meditation Hebrews x. 24, 25, " Let us consider one another to provoke to love," &c. ; and, " For ye have need of patience," &c. (Verses 36—39.)

Those Christian graces which he so ardently desired to see reigning in the society, he himself possessed and exhibited. The law of love was graven on his heart, and in his tongue was the law of kindness ; hence every thing savouring of contention, envy, or other fruits of the flesh, was as a sharp sword to his meek and gentle spirit : he denounced such things as the elements of the world, as the work of Satan, and exhorted Christians to flee from them as from the face of a serpent.

The mind of Mr. Lavers was deeply imbued with the spirit of his Divine Master, one of whose most glorious titles is that of " The Prince of Peace." (Isai. ix. 6.) He not only followed peace with all men, counting no sacrifice short of the truth too great to purchase it, but he also constantly urged upon all the necessity of cultivating the same spirit. Some estimate may be formed of the importance he attached to this so inadequately regarded duty, from the fact recorded by Mrs. Lavers, that it was the groundwork of his last two sermons ; hence it may strictly be said of him, that he summed up and closed his ministry, "*preaching peace by Jesus Christ.*"

The first of these discourses he delivered on the 17th of August, the evening preceding his first alarming illness, from Psal. cxxii. 6—8, " Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." The last of them, which was also the last he ever preached, was addressed to his little flock on the 26th of October, the very day before his relapse. His text was John xiv. 27, " Peace I leave with you ;

my peace I give unto you," &c. Here he dwelt with delight on the Divine Testator, his Godhead, and his merit; the valuable legacy he bequeathed to his people, and the inestimable price he was about to lay down to purchase it. He then contrasted in several particulars the peace which Christ gave with that which the world had to offer: whilst speaking of the deceit and presumption of the world in daring to put its transient, unsatisfactory, delusive peace, for a moment in competition with the solid, abiding, soul-satisfying peace which Jesus gives, his emaciated but expressive countenance was lighted up with holy indignation. In conclusion, after affectionately exhorting all present to seek this peace by faith in the blood of Jesus, and warning them against that momentary peace which proves the precursor of an eternal storm, he added, "Should I drop in this pulpit, I must once more tell you what I now feel of this blessed peace; it is solace in affliction, and support in trial; it is real and abiding; it flows like a river; and it effectually keeps both heart and mind through Christ Jesus, for it is 'perfect peace.'"

This faithful servant had felt a particular desire to bear his testimony of the truth on this occasion, although he had been much indisposed in health for several days; and finding, on his road to the chapel, that the disorder was returning, he prayed that, if consistent with the divine will, it might be restrained till the close of the service.

Several present, observing his pallid looks and enfeebled frame, were astonished at the more than ordinary energy of his manner, and few could refrain from tears whilst he pathetically entreated them to attend to the things which belonged to their peace before they were hid from their eyes. It was a fire kindled from heaven's own light, to bless them with a parting beam, before it sunk, to blaze for ever before the throne. The commemoration of the Saviour's dying love, at his table,

formed part of the service of this memorable day : and the scene was little less solemn and affecting than if he had been commissioned to address them in the language of his Lord, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Mr. Lavers had studied the apothegm of the Roman poet, "*Homo sum : humani nihil à me alienum puto*," consequently, nothing that concerned the welfare of his fellow-men was to him matter of indifference. Hence, he was the firm friend and advocate, not only of Negro emancipation, but also of the Peace Society :* the motto of his seal was stamped upon his heart, therefore his life and his lips pleaded its cause, and that motto, and that cause, was "Peace !" Although an admirer of the

* It is greatly to be deplored that the habits and the passions of men, the prejudices interwoven with the very sinews of education, and the siren adulation of poets, have cast a halo of false glory over war, that direst foe and most desolating scourge of the human race, and well nigh hid from the eyes of the sons of men that first-born of heaven, angelic peace, "at once the parent and the nurse of every good to man."

But, praised be the God of peace, the nations are at length awakening to the salutary truths, that one kingdom cannot thrive upon the ruins of another, and that the welfare of a part will ever be found conducive to the welfare of the whole. But Christians take still higher ground. The glory of God, and the example of the Saviour; the model of prayer he has enjoined, and the dying legacy he has bequeathed us; the prosperity of the Church; our own salvation, and the conversion of the world, are indissolubly connected with hearts actuated by love to God and love to man. Let us love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves, and we shall not resist evil; still less recompense evil for evil unto any man. "Love," says an inspired Apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law." "To keep peace and ensue it," is no Utopian scheme. The Society of Friends, and of Moravians or United Brethren, have long revered and practised this divine precept. The population of the Polynesian Islands, the New Zealanders not excepted, are adopting it, and proving that pacific principles bear upon their bosom richer treasures than the Pacific Ocean.

The Society for the Promotion of permanent and universal Peace

Reformation, he differed widely from the great Saxon Reformer in his wish that the Epistle of James were expunged from the canon of Scripture, not only because he loved the union of faith with works, but because he there discovered that "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable;" and that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

From one of Mr. Lavers's letters, written soon after his partial recovery, the following passage is selected, which calls for the more serious consideration from the circumstances under which it was penned.

"You may form some opinion of the virulence of the disease, and the paralyzing effect of intense suffering upon the mental powers, when I state my firm conviction, that had it found me in an unprepared state, and terminated in death, my soul must have been lost for ever. Hence I cannot but conclude that the Lord has raised me up again for a time to warn professors of the danger of halting between two opinions, and to urge upon every one the awful consequences which may result from his neglecting to secure a title and a meetness for heaven, till he find himself on the verge of an eternal world."

A few weeks previous to his last illness, an unusual degree of languor confined him to the house on the morning of the Sabbath. These hours he employed chiefly in meditating on the peculiar circumstances of the people of his charge, and in prayer on their behalf. Their state of experience, connected with an apprehension that he might soon be incapacitated to serve them in the Gospel, pressed with more than ordinary weight

as unfurled its standard; and it waves in Great Britain, in France, in America, and in Sweden. The tree of concord shall grow and her branches spread, till all nations shall repose under its shadow.

The late Rev. Richard Watson remarked, in his peculiarly legant style, that even the handle of an offensive weapon was never cut from a tree of righteousness.

upon his spirits. Addressing his dear wife on the subject, he observed, "I feel so intensely for the church that it seems as though something was playing upon every nerve, almost too much for the animal frame to sustain." In the evening of the day he attended divine service, and when the Minister had concluded, Mr. Lavers entered the pulpit, and entreated the people to seek a present salvation, as essential to constitute a meetness for heaven.

In this exercise, whereby he gave expression to the fulness of his heart, his spirits were refreshed, and even his bodily strength was for a season sensibly recruited.*

Transient, however, was the interval; since the disorder soon returned with increased virulence, eliciting the sympathy and solace of those softer friends

"Who call it conscience, nature, bliss, to know
The sad extremities of social woe."

* Cases of this kind will be found in the experience of eminently devoted men. Another instance may serve to confirm the truth. The late Rev. Henry Venn, of blessed memory, under whose roof it was the Editor's favoured lot to pass some of his earliest years, was attended in his last illness by that eminent surgeon, Mr. Pearson, of Golden Square. In the last stage of his disorder, Mr. Venn asked if he thought it possible that he could be detained much longer a prisoner below. To this Mr. Pearson replied, that the symptoms were certainly such as to indicate a speedy dissolution. This announcement the suffering saint received with a rapture of delight, anticipating an abundant entrance into the kingdom of his Lord and Saviour. His kind medical friend visiting him on the morrow, found him decidedly better. His daughters, who deemed it a high privilege to minister to him, inquired if Mr. Pearson could account for this favourable change, which they could scarcely have dared to anticipate. To this he replied, in substance, that through the power of sympathy, any joyous sensations, especially such as those of which their revered father was the subject, were fully adequate to produce such an effect. One of his apothegms for the young has been, and may still be, blessed to many. "Never rest satisfied," he would say, "with a religion that does not three things for you,—bring you answers to prayer; conquer your besetting sin; and make you happy."

To one who was constant in her visits to this prisoner of hope, his accustomed greeting, on her entering the room, was, "Jesus is precious! O, how precious, and so divinely near!" Then, if his strength permitted, he would descant at large on his person, atonement, resurrection, and government, as one whom the Spirit of truth had led into a rich experimental acquaintance with those holy mysteries.

He would often break forth in expressions of adoring wonder at the compassion and goodness of God towards one so unworthy: and, in subordination to spiritual blessings, the alleviations and supports so graciously afforded him in the time of sickness, were often the subject of his grateful acknowledgments.

At one time, when the pain in his back was excruciating, the dear sufferer thought he had uttered a groan, and even manifested something like impatience; but a holy jealousy had probably suggested that of which his watchful friends could discover no symptom. For a time he was engaged in ejaculatory prayer; then, with a look of meek contrition, he added, "*He* was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not *his* mouth: and thus would *I* be;" nor did this prayer ascend without an answer from the mercy-seat.

Not unfrequently his soul was carried so entirely above the weakness of its mortal part, that his hope and joy appeared to be full,

"Unutterably full, of glory and of God!"

and it was in expressions like the following that he endeavoured to convey his feelings:—"Jesus is very present, and he comforts me with such portions as these: 'It is I! be not afraid:' 'Because I live, thou shalt live also:' 'The joy of the Lord is your strength:' so that my soul cries out, 'Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord!'"

On another occasion,—“My heart is so filled with peace and joy that I long to proclaim it to all the people of God. It is like entering upon glory: already I antedate the felicities of heaven!

“His righteousness wearing, and cleansed by his blood,
Bold shall I appear in the presence of God.”

To a kind friend who attended him, he observed, “I enjoy such a paradise within, that at times I forget whether I have a body or not; but within a little I am again constrained to feel that I have not yet put it off.”

His dear wife and an esteemed friend having engaged in prayer with him one evening, his soul was so filled with the love and gracious presence of his God, that he called upon them to unite in praising him, and even shouted aloud for joy.

With this holy triumph, he had soul-humbling views of his shortcomings and infirmities, with a deep conviction that his strength was perfect weakness. His resignation was uniform and exemplary: he would often say, “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

The time was now fast approaching when this afflicted servant of the Most High should close his eyes on a world of sin and woe, to open them in a realm of bliss and glory. A week of intense and almost incessant suffering preceded his dissolution; but his resignation and his confidence continued uninterrupted.

The Saviour, whom he loved and served, was his support and his comforter when his strength and his heart were failing. During his few last days he grew gradually weaker, until reduced almost to a state of infancy. Recovering from a stupor in which he had some time lain, he remarked to a friend who was supporting his aching head, “Jesus was made very weak; he became an infant of days, and at length he was crucified through weakness: but it was not innate weakness, rather it was

divine compassion." This sympathizing friend, returning to her residence in the vicinity, after a short absence, again repaired to his sick chamber. Mr. Lavers was much animated on seeing her, and after praising the Lord for his care over her, he said, "I am the man that hath seen affliction. He hath chastened me with strong pain;" (and its lines were visible in his altered features;) "but his will is heaven!" His friend remarked, "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" to which, as well as to every scripture she quoted, he expressively responded. On Mrs. Lavers saying, "My love, are you desirous to depart, and be with Jesus?" he replied, "The joy is in resignation to the divine will; only let that will be done!" The desire to live appeared rather to preponderate, but it was solely with reference to the service of the sanctuary. Greater proof could scarcely be given of zeal for God's house, and of love to souls, than his willingness to endure a protracted conflict here, with the bright prospect of glory immediately in view. For the prosperity of the church and the conversion of sinners, he felt most intensely: often would he exclaim, "O that Israel would hearken unto Jehovah! then should their peace be as the river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea." To one who kindly attended him, he evinced his deep concern for the salvation of sinners. Observing him more than usually faint and languid, she asked him how he had passed the night, to which he gave this characteristic answer, "In entreating the Lord to write white letters upon black hearts."

In a subsequent interview, the kind friend who so greatly ministered to his comfort observed to him, "You will soon see Jesus face to face; nor ought we to desire your stay, although nature is selfish, and would prize such a fellow-traveller through the wilderness." He replied, "It ought not to be a wilderness: Jesus never made it such." This induced some remarks on the

present privileges of true believers, which clearly proved that whilst too many tarry in a wilderness state, he had entered into a present rest. The day previous to his departure, nature was exhausted by his endeavour to convey to his anxious friends his bright and joyous anticipations, by repeating aloud those beautiful and appropriate lines :—

“ Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place :
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise !”

In the course of that day, Tuesday, Nov. 8th, so great was his debility that all the animal faculties, except that of speech, seemed to have lost their power. On that night he summoned up his remaining strength, and for about five minutes engaged aloud in prayer, when he pleaded chiefly for the church of Christ at large, for the Honiton society, and for the neighbourhood.

Mrs. Lavers then asked him, “ Have you not some word of comfort for me ?” After a short pause, he answered, “ I have betrothed thee unto me in faithfulness.”

On the morning of Wednesday, it was apparent to those around him that his end was approaching. He made several efforts to speak, but in vain :—

“ Then there was silence,—not a word
Utter'd the grief of those who wept ;
Ere long ‘ a quiet sigh ’ was heard,
And he in Jesus sweetly slept.”

He finished his course at two o'clock, P.M., Nov. 9, 1831, in the thirty-second year of his age ; and his ransomed spirit, emancipated from its earthly prison, joined in the chorus of saints and angels, “ Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever !”

His remains were interred in the Methodist chapel* at Honiton, and a tablet erected to his memory with this inscription,—

Underneath
rests all that was mortal
of that faithful servant and Minister of Christ,
WILLIAM LAVERS.
His ransomed spirit
quitted this scene of suffering
November 9th, 1831, Ætat. 34.
He fought a good fight; he finished his course; he kept the faith:
Henceforth there is laid up for him
a crown of glory.
(Psalm xxxvii. 37.)

The Rev. Mr. Bowsal, an intimate friend of the departed, preached his funeral sermon from Acts vii. 55, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

"In silent anguish, O my friend,
When I recall thy worth,
Thy lovely life, thy early end,
I feel estranged from earth;
My soul with thine desires to rest,
Supremely and for ever blest!"

The following testimonies to Mr. Lavers's character and memory are selected, being the freewill offerings of disinterested Christian friendship, from those who knew him intimately, and as comprising the latest reminiscences of that departed saint, even to the period when mortality was swallowed up of life.

* The chapel was shortly after settled upon the Conference plan, and a Minister appointed to divide his labours between it and the one at Ottery St. Mary's.

In a letter to the Editor, Mrs. Hall writes as follows :—

Grove-Place, Margate, Jan. 27th, 1832.

I CANNOT but regret my inability to do justice to the exemplary spirit and deportment of our dear departed friend, whose character and memory is deeply engraven in my mind. During his sojourn with us, I enjoyed frequent opportunities of witnessing his ardent desire to win souls to Christ. In his labours of love towards my dear family and the circle of friends with whom we maintained intercourse, he invariably evinced the greatest fidelity, blended with the tenderest affection and most lively concern for their eternal salvation. Genuine piety and childlike simplicity were evidently recognised in all his words and actions, and could hardly fail of ensuring the esteem of every true disciple who had the opportunity of knowing him : these graces shone peculiarly when he was called to any service in his Master's vineyard. Such was the integrity of his soul, that he would have forfeited the good opinion of his dearest earthly friend, rather than have dishonoured God, by either approaching, or tacitly allowing in others, even "the appearance of evil." He was intent on redeeming time; although from great bodily suffering, especially after engaging in divine worship, rest and a reclined position were needful, we could with difficulty prevail upon him adequately to recruit exhausted nature. He seldom retired to rest till midnight, and he usually rose at daybreak; when he would pray in a low but audible tone for his whole parish,* as he termed it, which appeared very large. He was ac-

* This expression had reference to the memorable answer of the venerable Founder of Methodism to one who would have circumscribed his labours under the plea of avoiding irregularity: "I look upon *all the world as my parish*." That parish, with its untold

customed to remember individuals by name, and as much as possible to lay their distinct cases before the Lord. In these exercises he has often been overheard, at an early hour, pleading for me, and my now glorified partner, who is with him before the throne, ascribing salvation "to Him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood." There was a mutual attachment between these dear friends whilst here below, and they had much communion together on the great and precious truths of God. But this would lead me into a large field.—I do not remember any person who had so much power in prayer as our departed friend; and his expositions, whilst so clear, that a child might comprehend his meaning, were sufficiently choice in language, as well as rich in spirituality, to interest the more cultivated mind and edify those of more advanced experience.

His temper was always cheerful, as well as even, and his deportment under trial and persecution, of which I well knew him to be the subject, was truly exemplary; whilst these persecutions for righteousness' sake were so sanctified to his soul's good, that he lived on the verge of heaven, and in lively anticipation of that kingdom of glory which he now inherits. I never heard him speak an unkind word of any one.

Mr. Lavers's was eminently a grateful spirit: hence from his lips praise and thanksgiving were continually rising to a covenant-keeping God, whose loving-kindness was ever before his eyes. He would often contrast, with humble adoring wonder, the comforts he enjoyed, with the suffering state of the Lord of life and glory in the days of his humiliation. "My dear friends," he

millions, before he entered upon his reward, he bequeathed to his children as the object of their warmest sympathies, and to the utmost of their ability, as the sphere of their zealous and persevering labours.

would often say, "the Lord causes my cup to run over with blessings ; they are new every morning, and fresh every evening, and great is his faithfulness."

In short, like Enoch, he walked with God ; like John the Baptist, he was a burning and a shining light ; and in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, he was seen bearing the image of his Lord.

May we have grace thus to walk, and thus to commune with our God and Saviour ; live under the influence of the doctrines in which his soul delighted, and be followers of him as far as he followed Christ !

Uniform are the testimonies that Mr. Lavers was endued with that charity which "endureth all things, and is not provoked ;" and it is well known that some of his latest intercessory prayers were for his persecutors.

In this feature he stands out the prototype of the poet's picture :—

" As trampled on by careless feet,
The flowers of the field,
By injury become more sweet,
A richer fragrance yield :
So breathes the meek and pious heart
Forgiveness to its foes ;
More noble under sorrow's smart,
More heavenly in its woes."

It behoves us, as Christians, to ponder well the fact, that a forgiving spirit is invariably one of the fruits of adoption. Although our forgiveness of injuries constitutes no part of our title to the pardoning mercy of God, our Lord and Master emphatically taught his disciples that the absence of this grace involves the loss of all the privileges of sonship ; (Matt. xviii. 25 ;) and that, however costly the gift brought to the altar, without the full

and cordial remission of our brother's trespasses, no fire from heaven will fall to attest an accepted sacrifice. (Matt. v. 23—25.)

For the last tribute to the memory of their mutual friend, the Editor is indebted to the same pen which contributed to record the closing scene of his earthly pilgrimage.

Escot, April 9th, 1832.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WILL no longer delay forwarding you the sketch I have attempted of our dear departed friend's character. I could, with truth, have enlarged on every feature, but I made it as brief as possible, considering you were in possession of sufficient materials for narrative. My details would have consisted chiefly of different walks and visits paid by him to Escot, and by me to Ottery and Honiton. They were many; yet in retrospection very few, for they were both precious and profitable, and would be much more so could they now be repeated. Yet He orders all things well who called his child home to himself. When I have seen this dear sufferer stretched on a couch in an upper room, destitute of many things in which the children of this world abound, I have drawn the contrast in my mind between the humility of his earthly condition and the bright reversion which awaited him: into what a state has he entered; on what a throne is he now seated! Farewell!

Yours, &c., &c.,

MARIA KENNAWAY.

Outlines of the Character of the late Rev. Wm. Lavers.

"LIVELY as my remembrance is, and ever will be, of the varied excellences of our departed friend's character, I have been reluctant to attempt to sketch it, under a feeling of my utter inability to give a faithful

representation of the features of his uniformly deep and consistent spiritual life.

“Exemplary, however, as were his walk and conversation, I am persuaded that they formed the least considerable part of that divine life which he lived, ‘not unto men but unto God ;’ and that in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, his holy wrestlings with God, his strong crying and tears, his persevering supplications for the church, especially for those of its members who were in spiritual distress, his deep abasement of soul, his instant prayer, and his unbounded reliance on the rich and sure promises of the Gospel, will be found noted in God’s book, as the highest, if not the most acceptable, part of his services.

“Convinced that we can form but an imperfect estimate of this his *hidden* life, I would turn to that which it was my privilege to witness: desiring grace, that every remembrance may be blessed to my own soul, by humbling it under a view of its low attainments, and stirring it up to the same diligence in running the heavenly race, which distinguished our departed friend.

“I may say, I thank my God upon every remembrance of him ; he was to us a living epistle of Christ: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, being emphatically the end of his conversation.

“Comparatively short as our acquaintance was, I believe few had opportunities of observing him under such varied circumstances and trials. I have seen him both amongst the poor and amongst the rich ; both with the sorrowful and with the rejoicing. I have known him under straitened circumstances, and also when the Lord’s tender care and providence were preventing his every want. I have known him the object of the warmest love and esteem, both of the flock to whom he ministered, and of the brethren with whom he took sweet counsel; at other times subjected to unmerited obloquy, or the victim of unprovoked hostility ; and I can testify

that everywhere, and in all things, he was instructed 'both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need,' rejoicing to pass through evil report as well as good report; that by knowing something of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, he might be the more conformed to his image.

"His conversation was habitually in heaven; and to exalt the Saviour was the chief aim of all his thoughts and actions. Often would he say, 'How can we exalt Him to-day, as his love demands? O let us be much in prayer, that he would enable us to honour him in every motion of the mind!'

"His Saviour's image, which he delighted to contemplate, was drawn upon his soul: the new law of love was deeply engraven there; hence he loved, with most fervent affection, the poorest member of the household of faith.

"He was a consistent and faithful witness of the truth; bearing his testimony to the despised doctrines of the cross with equal plainness and sincerity in the more polished circle, and in the lowliest cottage.

"His deportment amongst those of higher rank was peculiarly retiring; and so strenuously did he regard the scriptural admonition, 'Honour to whom honour is due,' that it was with the greatest difficulty he could be prevailed on to take that higher seat amongst them which their respect for his character and office unanimously allotted him. He ever maintained that solemn dignity which became an ambassador of Christ, and that circumspection and gravity befitting one who was a temple of the Holy Ghost. He took no part in trifling conversation, and whilst his humility rendered it painful to him to take the lead, he seemed insensibly to turn the discourse into a profitable channel; the Holy Spirit, under whose teaching he lived, furnishing him with a rich abundance of spiritual topics.

"In another sense, he knew no distinction of persons.

He *loved* the poor, and, like his gracious Master, he lived among them ; their humble dwellings were his favourite places of resort ; and under the solemn feeling that the redemption of their souls was precious, at the expense of health and comfort, he would to a late hour pursue his walks among them, and sitting in their chimney corners, call up all his energies in displaying to them a Saviour's love, and entreating them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. Nor would he absent himself from them, although pain and languor might prevent his speaking more than a few words. ' When he could do nothing else for me,' said a poor afflicted member of his flock, ' he would sit and pity me.' And truly his labours among them were not in vain. Numbers, on a sick or dying bed, have reaped inexpressible consolation from his ministrations, and the remembrance of them is still vivid in the breast of many a bereaved relative. He knew well how to weep with those that wept, and he lightened the burden of many an aching heart, by bearing its sorrows, with a prevailing power, to the mercy-seat. Nor was he less able to rejoice with them that rejoiced ; his soul was prepared to mingle its song of praise with the most joyful : borne himself above the sorrows of a very suffering body, by the joys of the salvation on which his soul was feasting, no wonder that he should be qualified to strengthen the weak and to confirm the strong.

" Yet was the perfume of the Saviour's name rarely more richly shed abroad than in the hours when, in the confidence of Christian friendship, he would speak of the Lord's dealings with his own soul : a rich treasury of heartfelt experience was unfolded to the favoured individuals with whom he took sweet counsel ; and they can testify that his visits were as the dew from the Lord, as showers on the grass, refreshing and reviving for many days.

" All his delight was in the saints that are upon the

earth ; still was it most manifest that his fellowship with them was thus sweet, because it brought them into more sensible communion with Christ, their centre of union : his intercourse with them seemed but half to please, unless concluded with united prayer ; and in this solemn exercise most peculiarly was he enabled to carry their souls, with his own, into the immediate presence of his Saviour.

“ In thus calling to mind the spirit of our departed brother, in all his walk and conversation whilst he sojourned amongst us, the inquiry suggests itself, whence flowed this continuous stream of love and charity ? Not from nature, whose highest attainments are at least but poor counterfeits of such real excellence. The secret lay in this, he was born again of the Spirit : Christ was the life, and breath, and fountain of his life. By the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, the old man, which is corrupt, was put off ; and the new man, which is renewed in righteousness and true holiness, put on. His renewed life was one of daily, hourly faith upon all the purchased possessions of the covenant. By faith he reckoned himself dead with Christ : hence the human passions were continually mortified ; sin was very hateful ; the world very contemptible ; and the cross very glorious. By faith he also viewed himself risen with Christ ; his heart and his treasure were in heaven ; and the kingdom of God, which is ‘ righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,’ was brought into his soul.

“ His peace, which, during the latter years of his pilgrimage, flowed as a river, had its rise in no imperfect knowledge of that sin with which, as a fallen son of Adam, he was tainted. All who knew him will testify how keenly he felt the sinfulness of sin, and how deeply he deplored feeling its slightest touch. The peace he enjoyed flowed to him from the wounds of his crucified Saviour : hence, whilst he felt his own destitution, he knew himself to be clothed in the righteousness of

Christ ; and in the full view of his own unworthiness, he saw himself arrayed in the beauty of the Lord ; and, divested of all self-dependence, he was full of confidence in his God. He walked in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free, and, constrained by love, he yielded up himself a willing sacrifice. He seemed-evermore to exclaim with Ephraim, ‘What have I to do any more with idols?’ and with his heavenly Pattern, ‘I delight to do thy will, O God ! yea, thy law is within my heart.’

“Let us ascribe all the glory of this grace to Him who had predestinated his servant to holiness, and had chosen him, from before the foundation of the world, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Truly in him that precious promise was fulfilled, ‘I will be as the dew unto Israel ; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his fruits as Lebanon ; his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.’ And we delight to make mention of the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and of the praises of our God, in all that the Lord bestowed upon him, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses.”

“Escot, April, 1832.”

In closing this little memoir, the Editor trusts it will be deemed neither superfluous nor unprofitable, notwithstanding the correlative testimonies, to lay before the reader a few fondly cherished reminiscences of one whose memorial is still fresh as the mountain breeze, and fragrant as the flowers of the spring.

It will have appeared manifest, from a perusal of the foregoing pages, that Mr. Lavers exhibited, in sweet and attractive harmony, those graces denominated in Holy Scripture, “the fruit of the Spirit ;” for he showed mercy, and spoke truth ; he did righteousness, and followed peace. Looking to Jesus, he was saved

alike from legal bondage and Antinomian licentiousness. He had learned that difficult lesson, to distrust himself when apparently most secure. In steering his bark through the perilous ocean of life, whilst hope spread the canvass, and love supplied the propitious gale, the ballast of godly fear proved a safeguard from the rock and the whirlpool. He possessed a soul burning with zeal for the glory of God, and the best interests of his fellow-men. He was one in spirit with the late Dr. Buchanan, that bright star of our portion of the eastern hemisphere, who was wont to say, "It is never altogether right with me, unless I can look every man I meet in the face, and earnestly pray for his everlasting salvation." Mr. Lavers was a faithful and wise steward of the mysteries of the kingdom; a watchful and tender under-shepherd, going before the flock in the path of holiness and self-denial, and feeding them with knowledge and understanding. In his pastoral visits he strove to draw the heads of families into closer communion with God, with each other, and with the whole household of faith.* The children and servants were no less objects of his solicitude, recipients of his advice, and sharers in his prayers. Their spiritual state might be generally inferred from the joy with which they welcomed, or the reluctance with which they submitted, to his salutary

* Those sweet lines of Dr. A. Reid (admirably as they delineate a primary object of the "Evangelical Alliance," that bright foreshadowing of the approaching blissful millennium) are the very counterpart of the feelings which animated this servant of the Most High:—

"Our hope, our joy, our life, our soul,
In our one Saviour meet;
And what in earth or heaven shall break
A union so complete?

"How blest are they who seek in Him
A union to their friend!
Their love shall grow through life's decay,
And live when life shall end."

instructions. To adopt an illustration of the Rev. Howard Hinton, Mr. Lavers resembled not only the candle giving light to all that are in the house, but the lamp set in the porch or door-way, which, while it illumines those within, also casts some ray of light on every passing traveller. Thus he was wont, in journeying to his daily appointments, to engage in conversation with many a passing traveller, closed, at times, with prayer under the open canopy of heaven; and many a wanderer did that good Evangelist, in this manner, turn from the by-paths of sin and folly, and induce to set out on pilgrimage for the celestial city. A noble feature in the character of this departed saint, was his entire freedom from that plague spot which has so grievously infected the church of Christ,—*covetousness*. He valued money neither for its own sake, nor for the unsatisfying pleasure, nor for the poor distinction, it might afford its possessor. Had he coveted wealth, an opportunity offered for his securing it, and with it what the world would deem an eligible matrimonial connexion; but, in his estimation, these had been far too dearly purchased by an infraction of the Apostle's interdict in 2 Cor. vi. 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." He well knew that such an incongruous and unscriptural union of light with darkness was the swift precursor of the deluge, and that it has proved, through each successive age, the bane of Christian society, the antagonist of personal and family piety, and the grave of immortal souls. With reference to domestic duties, it will be universally acknowledged that a son who exercised habitual self-denial to contribute to the comfort of his earthly parents, and relinquished his heart's desire to go and evangelize the heathen, lest he should mar an aged mother's peace; and a son in the Gospel, who risked both health and life to watch by the couch, and soothe the sufferings of a father in Christ, must have been imbued with

filial piety and susceptible of the warmest friendship. His converse, and even his countenance, irradiated by communion with the Deity, diffused a halo of peace and joy around the social circle, whilst, like him who of old was the meekest of men, he wist not that his face shone.

Mr. Lavers's marriage, as described in the narrative, was pure, hallowed, and joyous, for its sweet and sacred tie was interwoven with the golden chain of godliness, and upon it was invoked the blessing of heaven. Like the arc of promise, it was hailed as a bright and gracious token of covenant love; although, transient in duration, and moist with the cloud of affliction, it proved, like the rainbow, "gilded tears." With a grateful heart Mr. Lavers received a wife as from the Lord, and he loved and cherished her even as Christ the church. Anxious, primarily, to become her helpmeet in the heavenly course, he proved in all respects a kind, considerate, and gracious husband, "giving honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel, that their prayers might not be hindered." His was a peculiarly peaceful and conciliatory spirit. Far from speaking evil of any one, "in his tongue was the law of kindness." He turned a deaf ear to all hard speeches and uncharitable surmisings, and ever strove to pour the oil of Christian charity on the troubled waters of strife and contention. Nor was he less distinguished by his faithful and, at the same time, judicious discharge of that sadly-neglected and ill-requited duty, the reproof of sin. Baptized with "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," he loved his neighbour as himself, consequently he could not "suffer sin upon him." (Lev. xix. 17, 18.) The sword of the Spirit, wielded by the conjoint power of faith and love,

" Was death to sin; was life
To those who mourn'd for sin;
It kindled and it silenced strife,
Made war and peace within."

Mr. Lavers not only manifested a patient, submissive, and resigned spirit, both under severe and protracted bodily sufferings, and the more painful wounds inflicted in the house of his friends, but of few could it be more truthfully affirmed, that he was "strengthened with all might, unto all patience and long-suffering, *with joyfulness*;" knowing and rightly estimating the value of the bequest recorded in Phil. i. 29, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

Notwithstanding there was thus lucidly exhibited in Mr. Lavers's entire character and deportment so much of those things which are true, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; he was at different periods the subject of gross misrepresentation, unmerited obloquy, and bitter persecution; although his enemies could find no fault in him, as in the case of the "man greatly beloved," unless it were concerning the law of his God. But the experienced sufferer well knew that crosses and afflictions are the seed out of which grow the flower of eternal glory. The trial of his faith worked patience, and in him patience had its perfect work. He was faithful unto death, and he has received the crown of eternal life.

May both reader and writer, through the tender mercy of God, so seek as to find grace and strength to follow him, even as he followed Christ; and, persevering in the pathway of faith and holiness, ultimately join him, with the innumerable company of the redeemed, in those bright mansions where there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.

"Yes, the hour, the hour is hasting;
 Spirit *shall* with spirit blend;
 Fast mortality is wasting,
 Soon the secret all shall end.
 Let, then, thought hold sweet communion;
 Let us breathe the mutual prayer,—
 Till in heaven's eternal union,
 O, my friend, to meet thee there!"

ERRATA.

Page 24, line 17, for 1832, read 1823.

39, line 2, for *was* read *were*.

— line 3, for *it* read *they*.

226, line 4 from bottom, for *thirty-second* read *thirty-fourth*.